

# PERSUADABLE

**How Great Leaders Change Their  
Minds to Change the World**



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## The Changing Face of Leadership

As President Obama and his top advisers contemplated how to attack the Pakistani compound allegedly housing Osama bin Laden, they began to discuss the possibility of a covert raid. This option was complex, and it put troops in imminent danger, but it also carried the potential for a great reward. In contrast to an unmanned drone strike or a B-2 bomber mission, the raid team would be able to positively identify the enemy, leaving no doubts that the man being targeted was in fact bin Laden.<sup>1</sup> A raid team would also be able to collect any physical intelligence residing on the premises, a potential treasure trove of information that might aid in thwarting future terrorist attacks. But what if the Pakistani military—which was stationed dangerously close to the compound—engaged the raid team in a firefight? What if American troops were injured or killed? What if bin Laden wasn’t there? These were frightening questions that required answers. So, to further investigate the raid option, the administration called in the man who would ultimately be tapped to lead it, the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), Admiral William McRaven.

McRaven was an impressive figure. During his tenure leading

JSOC, the success rate for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan surged from 35 percent to over 80 percent.<sup>2</sup> McRaven's teams had been responsible for the capture of Saddam Hussein and the rescue of Captain Richard Phillips from Somali pirates (along with many classified accomplishments still unreleased). And McRaven certainly looks the part. He's six foot one, broad shouldered, with perfect posture and an impeccable uniform. His three stars (soon to be four) only add to his domineering presence. But there was one thing about McRaven that was particularly exceptional, something that surprised many in the administration.

His humility.

McRaven was modest, open to suggestion, and willing to change his mind. In fact, from the very beginning, McRaven freely admitted that he didn't have all the answers. After explaining the mission parameters for the first time, McRaven confessed, "Mr. President, we haven't thoroughly tested this out yet and we don't know if we can do it, but when we do, I'll come back to you and I'll tell you straight up." Then McRaven did just that. He tested and concluded that the mission was viable—but still reminded everyone of its fallibility. "They're gonna land on the compound and something is going to go wrong. They're going to have to improvise, change the plan, go to Plan B, or wriggle their way out of a sticky situation."<sup>3</sup>

Over many meetings, the president and his team grilled McRaven, challenging his plans, second-guessing his thinking, looking for weaknesses. McRaven didn't seem to mind; he appeared to approach this scrutiny without ego. He didn't agree with every criticism, but Undersecretary Michèle Flournoy noted that in response to a good question, McRaven would calmly respond, "You know, I haven't thought about that, but I need to."<sup>4</sup>

And McRaven wasn't just paying lip service—he made substantial

changes to his plans on the basis of others' input. For example, when McRaven proposed having backup Chinook helicopters stationed on the Afghan-Pakistani border—to minimize the blowback from the Pakistani government for infringing on its sovereignty—President Obama countered that the SEALs needed backup more readily available in the event they had to fight their way out. McRaven was persuaded. The Chinooks would be flown deep into Pakistan, closer to the Abbottabad compound, ready to move.<sup>5</sup>

On April 29, 2011, after a careful deliberation process with his team, President Obama officially ordered the Seal Team Six raid overseen by Admiral William McRaven. Later, the president said it was ultimately his confidence in McRaven that made the difference in going ahead with the raid. “He just never looks like he’s surprised by anything.”<sup>6</sup> The president was right. During the raid, as McRaven communicated the real-time progress of the mission to the White House via secure link, one of the SEAL team’s two Black Hawk helicopters went down. McRaven was reportedly expressionless, relaying the news of the crash with a calm, casual voice. One of the participants on the call later said he felt like he might throw up, but not McRaven.<sup>7</sup> When asked afterward to describe what happened, his explanation was drama free: the team had a contingency plan, executed that contingency plan, and continued on with the mission. And continue they did, successfully completing one of the most important military operations in United States history.



THIS IS A BOOK about persuadability, the genuine willingness and ability to change your mind in the face of new evidence. Being persuadable requires rejecting absolute certainty, treating your beliefs as temporary, and acknowledging the possibility that no matter

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how confident you are about any particular opinion—you could be wrong. It involves actively seeking out criticism and counterarguments against even your most long-standing favored beliefs. Most important, persuadability entails evaluating those arguments as objectively as possible and updating your beliefs accordingly. In *Persuadable*, I'll argue that persuadability is a vastly underappreciated advantage in business and life. It's one of the most critical skills of modern leadership. But I won't just explain *why* you should be persuadable. Distilling cutting-edge research from cognitive and social psychology, I'll show you precisely *how*. Specifically, you'll learn the seven practices of persuadable leaders:

- Consider the Opposite
- Update Your Beliefs Incrementally
- Kill Your Darlings
- Take the Perspectives of Others
- Avoid Being Too Persuadable
- Convert Early
- Take On Your Own Tribe

These simple yet powerful habits have accelerated the path to success for some of the best leaders in the world, and they have the potential to do the same for you.

The focus of this book—changing our own minds—may surprise you. And it's understandable why: it's unusual. Just stroll through the business section of any bookstore, and you'll be hard-pressed to find any books dedicated to persuadability. Instead, you'll find dozens of books promoting persuasiveness. Shelves are jam-packed with bold advice for converting others to your cause, featuring audacious titles like *Get Anyone to Do Anything*, *How to Win Friends and Influence*

*People*, and my personal favorite, *How to Persuade People Who Don't Want to Be Persuaded*. But as we all relentlessly pursue the one word, tactic, or principle that will help us convince someone else, we forget to ask ourselves an obvious question: is it possible *I'm* the one who needs to be convinced? What invaluable, potentially innovative information am I missing by focusing exclusively on persuading others?

One of the reasons why leaders fail to ask these questions is that they defy our traditional leadership archetype. Strong leaders—our culture teaches us—possess three Cs: confidence, conviction, and consistency. Those qualities are perhaps most famously embodied by General George S. Patton, the headstrong authoritarian with a big ego, unmatched audacity, and immutable resolve.

Which is why if you read the accounts of Admiral William McRaven, you might be as stunned as I was to learn that the man who led the daring mission to get Osama bin Laden is nothing like Patton. In fact, he's nearly the opposite. McRaven is vigilant about being overconfident. He seems fully prepared to abandon an idea that no longer makes sense, and he doesn't seem to care much at all about being consistent. Is it merely an anomaly that the most successful (now retired) military leader in the world doesn't fit the traditional leadership archetype? Or is it a pattern? Let's test the notion with a couple of examples featuring two of the most successful leaders in the worlds of business and finance: Jeff Bezos and Ray Dalio.

On the surface, Jeff Bezos seems like a perfect example of the traditional leadership archetype. Bezos turned Amazon from a figment of his imagination into a multibillion-dollar online retailer that sells virtually any product you can think of—all while disrupting countless industries along the way. You would think that Bezos must have had Colonel Sanders-like certainty in his vision to make that happen. (The idolized founder of KFC, as the much-repeated

legend goes, had so much faith in his fried chicken that he put up with being rejected over 1,000 times before he made his first door-to-door sale.) Bezos too must be a man equally unwilling to change or give up on his ideas. Right?

Wrong.

As is well documented in *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Amazon*, the man is far from unwavering. In fact, Bezos admittedly abhors conviction. Over the course of building Amazon he has changed his mind countless times and abandoned many projects in the process. Some of Amazon's greatest innovations happened as a result of giving up on an idea without needless delay and then pivoting toward a better one. For example, when Amazon Auctions—a category launched to compete with eBay—was failing, Bezos wasted little time shutting it down. He didn't take the failure personally; he simply changed his approach. After several more adjustments, the project would ultimately become Amazon's highly profitable third-party-sellers program.<sup>8</sup>

That doesn't mean that Bezos lacks resolve. He has plenty. Nor does he lack a strong point of view—the stories of his excoriating his employees for saying something that he thinks is idiotic are infamous. It's just that he treats his point of view as temporary. In late 2012, Bezos stopped by the office of Basecamp, a small innovative software company that he mentors, to discuss product strategy. According to cofounder Jason Fried, “[Bezos] made it clear that people who are right change their minds a lot.”<sup>9</sup> And the research, as we'll learn, supports Bezos's claim. Bezos went on to encourage his audience “to have ideas tomorrow that contradict ideas you have today.” It's clear that Bezos, whom we'll analyze further in chapter 7, strikingly refutes the traditional leadership archetype.

What about Ray Dalio, the man who founded and runs Bridgewater, the most successful hedge fund in the world? Wall Street types are often notoriously cocksure. Surely Dalio embodies a Patton-esque degree of confidence, conviction, and consistency?

As it turns out, Dalio is perhaps the most persuadable of the three men discussed in this chapter.

Dalio publicly admits that the driving force behind his success is “fearing being wrong, no matter how confident I am that I’m right.”<sup>10</sup> Throughout his career, Dalio has ruthlessly autopsied his own failed trades in order to learn from his mistakes. As a result, his prized investment algorithm has changed again and again. Dalio takes no shame in this constant revision. He knows that his willingness to admit he doesn’t understand the world perfectly is his greatest asset. Whereas most people deny that they have an inflated sense of their own performance—research has shown this numerous times; for example, despite being a mathematical impossibility, 94 percent of professors rate themselves above average relative to their peers—Ray refuses to be similarly deluded.<sup>11</sup> For this reason, he insistently encourages criticism. In fact, he’s built his organization around the principle of radical transparency, where anyone can and should provide brutally honest criticism to anyone else at any time. To Dalio, any other kind of culture would be crazy, as he explained in a recent interview: “Imagine, if you have a disease, would you want to know that you have that disease or would you not want to know? I’d want to know. If you have a weakness, do you want to know that you have the weakness or do you not want to know?”<sup>12</sup>

One day Bridgewater hosted representatives from a big European pension fund for a client meeting in their Connecticut offices. The meeting went poorly, and according to one of the salespeople in

attendance, it was largely because of Ray. The salesperson accused the CEO of being inarticulate, droning on for too long, and single-handedly tanking the meeting. Other participants concurred. One of the analysts, just a year out of school, was asked to grade Dalio. He gave him an F. Most CEOs would have been livid at the idea of being dressed down by a junior member of their team, but Ray loved it. He accepted the feedback and promised to do better next time.<sup>13</sup>

Make no mistake, Ray's openness to criticism is rarely an act of selflessness. On the contrary, it's profoundly self-interested—and Dalio knows it. Dalio understands that valid criticism, regardless of whether it comes from a VP or an intern, provides him an invaluable opportunity to become better. That doesn't mean that Dalio doesn't have an ego; some accuse him of having an oversize one. What it means is that Dalio is willing to lose face, when the evidence demands it, because he is so invested in personal improvement, and the enormous achievements that this has brought him.

McRaven, Bezos, and Dalio—three of the most successful leaders in the world—are championing a different kind of mind-set. A mind-set that treats overconfidence like kryptonite, and inconsistency as a strength. A mind-set skeptical of conviction and committed to criticism. And these three are not alone. In every imaginable field, a stunning number of successful leaders are breaking away from the traditional leadership archetype. One after another, they're progressively moving toward a new, flexible way of thinking: persuadability.

Which raises the question: why now? Let's revisit McRaven's successful mission in Pakistan to find the answer.

One thing you have to understand about the Abbottabad raid is that it was a special operations mission, and special operations are, well—special. They're unconventional and full of surprises.

In special operations, events change rapidly and new information comes in all the time, sometimes right up to the minute before the mission commences. And no matter how superb the plan is, it never survives first contact with the enemy. The enemy constantly changes and adapts. Highly decisive leaders, with their penchant for confidence, conviction, and consistency, may perform well in static environments. McRaven, however, understands a simple yet rarely embraced truth: In environments characterized by complexity, uncertainty, and dynamism, it's impossible to have all the answers. If you want to succeed, you must be prepared to change your mind.

But being prepared to change your mind isn't just a lesson for a few elite units like Seal Team Six. Warfare has changed over the last 50 years, and special operations is no longer an outlier. It's the norm. And this shift is not unique to the military—it's happening everywhere. Globalization, hyperconnectedness, and the rapid advancement of technology have all made the world more complex, dynamic, and unpredictable. Today—whether it be business, science, government, philanthropy, medicine, politics, even relationships—everything is special operations. At the same time, we have access to more knowledge, data, and analytics than ever before to help us make sense of this world. Smart leaders exploit this shift, viewing it as an opportunity to succeed. In a world that is unpredictable, ultracompetitive, and fast changing, being persuadable is the ultimate competitive advantage.

Specifically—as chapter 2 will demonstrate—being persuadable gives leaders three key advantages. The first is accuracy. Being persuadable enables a better, more precise understanding of the world. This improved understanding allows you to make smarter decisions and more accurate judgments. Improved accuracy begets the two other advantages: agility and growth. Being persuadable improves

your ability to recognize and swiftly respond to incoming threats and opportunities. Instead of dragging your feet, you'll be able to counter threats early and capitalize on opportunities before they've passed you by. And finally, being persuadable allows you to honestly evaluate your performance so that you can identify your own weaknesses, as well as solicit feedback in order to improve.

At this point, you may be nodding your head in agreement but at the same time thinking to yourself, "I'm already open-minded." And perhaps you are, but while open-mindedness is important, one of the major themes of this book is that it's not nearly enough. Open-mindedness generally implies being receptive to new information that contradicts your existing beliefs. But that's a passive activity. What distinguishes the most successful modern leaders is that they're not just open-minded; they're what Jonathan Baron, professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, calls "*actively* open-minded."<sup>14</sup> They don't wait for this unpleasant information to hit them in the face. They seek it out themselves. They are unusually willing to scrutinize their favored beliefs in the same way they scrutinize their unfavored beliefs, something that human beings don't naturally do.

Consider this example: Imagine you're feeling a bit under the weather, and to be safe, you go to the doctor for a checkup. To your shock, after performing a few tests, the doctor tells you that you have a rare life-threatening disease. What would you do? Panicked, your first thought will probably be, "The doctor got it wrong!" and you'll quickly seek out a second opinion. If the second opinion comes back the same, it's not out of the question for you to seek out a third or fourth or even a fifth opinion. But now consider the opposite scenario, one in which the same doctor performs the same test—only this time, you are told you're in perfect health. Do you even think to get a second opinion? Nope. Because all leaders, even

the open-minded ones, have a double standard. We're in much less of a hurry to disprove favorable beliefs than we are unfavorable ones.\*

Actively open-minded leaders are in a hurry to find out the truth no matter what it is, good or bad. They understand that the quicker they know the truth, the faster they can deal with it. Highly successful leaders like McRaven, Bezos, Dalio, and others that I'll profile in this book go out of their way to challenge and even kill off their most cherished beliefs. If they're successful, good riddance. The belief deserved to be discarded. If it survives, they, as well as the belief, will emerge stronger. It's this gutsy mind-set that allows leaders to reap the most benefits of the Persuadable advantage.

Throughout this book, I'll show you the Persuadable advantage in action. I'll introduce you to various "Persuadables," impressive men and women who have, under difficult circumstances, been persuadable and, as a result, created success for themselves and their organizations. I'll recount how Alan Mulally saved Ford Motor Company, not by staying the course but by continually changing course in response to new data. How a Nobel Prize-winning scientist discovered the cause of ulcers by doing what no other scientist for decades had done: paying attention to evidence that contradicted his beliefs. How Christine Lagarde successfully transformed the culture of her firm by "caving into the pressure" from her detractors. You'll learn how a small group of highly effective therapists called "supershrinks" achieve superior results by regularly submitting to the criticism of their patients. In examining these exceptional individuals, my hope is that you will decide to become a Persuadable yourself, and reap the rewards of this powerful, paradigm-shifting mind-set.

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\* Find out how persuadable you really are by taking a free online assessment at [www.areyoupersuadable.com](http://www.areyoupersuadable.com).



Yet even those who are convinced of the benefits of being persuadable may hesitate to change their minds. Deep down, we associate changing our minds with weakness of character. For evidence, look no further than the language of successful leadership. Strong leaders “stay the course.” They “defy the critics.” They “prove them wrong.” These phrases resonate with us because we’ve been led to believe that conviction is the heart of integrity. To change your mind is to “flip-flop”; to doubt your own beliefs is to “lack a core.” All too often, leaders who are persuaded by others are labeled “pushovers” or are accused of “caving in.” With these falsehoods in the way, it’s difficult for leaders to revise their strategies. That’s why in chapters 3 and 4, we’ll take a deep look into the biological and cultural origins of these claims. In doing so, we’ll see them for what they are, myths, and I’ll show you why the willingness to update your position in the face of evidence is the greatest sign of strength a leader can display.

Still, even for those who understand that being persuadable is a leadership and character strength, revising beliefs won’t be easy. Several obstacles stand in the way.

### The Cognitive Miser

One of the reasons why it’s so difficult to change our minds—even if we are willing and eager—is because we are cognitive misers, with brains designed to conserve energy. When we come across data suggesting that our belief is wrong, our brain is quick to dismiss the new data, rather than throw out the existing belief and expend the energy involved in rebuilding and recovering from this discovery. One way to overcome this built-in limitation is to embrace a special kind of

thinking called reflective thinking, which I'll discuss in chapter 5. Sometimes we deploy this skill instinctively, though most of the time we have to consciously activate it. Understanding how to access this skill intentionally, so as to recognize counterevidence and update our beliefs, is a key component of persuadability.

### The Binary Default

Another barrier to being persuadable is our tendency to see the world in black and white. Our well-documented desire to eliminate uncertainty means that once we take a position we see it as definite, and it takes an overwhelming amount of evidence to shift our minds. Unfortunately, the world doesn't usually present us with an overwhelming amount of data all at once. But if we choose, we can shift our perspective incrementally. Which is why learning to think probabilistically, as I'll describe in chapter 6, can provide us with the ability to do just that.

### We Can't Handle the Truth

Sometimes, we lack the willingness to see the truth because the truth threatens something that we care about. It may be our material self-interest—as Upton Sinclair once wrote, “It’s impossible to make a man understand something, when his salary depends on him not understanding it”—or it may be our relationships that are threatened. But often the most powerful resistance comes when the truth threatens our *identity*. We all have a favorable way that we see ourselves that we don’t wish to change. When we feel any of these ideal beliefs are endangered, we engage in fight-or-flight behavior. Either we become defensive and ferociously guard our beliefs, or we bury

our heads in the sand, pretending that the upsetting facts don't exist. Absurdly, we do this even when it's to our great detriment. Why?

This irrational behavior is based on a fundamental miscalculation we tend to make. We often *overestimate* the potential fallout of facing reality, while we *underestimate* the benefits. If we can learn to accurately assess the risk and reward of facing the facts—including the unpleasant ones—then we can not only be open to the truth; we can intrepidly lean into it. Chapter 7 promises you proven tools from the world of cognitive behavioral therapy to do just that.

### The Perspective-Taking Handicap

Being persuadable requires considering the opinions of others. But we can't fully understand these opinions without viewing them from the perspective of those that offer them. Unfortunately, we'll learn that leaders, by virtue of their positions of power, have an inherently difficult time taking perspectives. In chapter 8, I'll analyze the psychological factors that cause this, as well as introduce two amazingly simple questions that can turn perspective taking from a handicap into a leadership asset.

### Too Persuadable?

Of course, leaders can't spend all their time and attention on soliciting and considering new information. If they did, they would end up in a state of paralysis and never act. They must be cautious not to use persuadability as a means for avoiding action, with endless Hamlet-esque deliberation. Persuadable leaders do make tough decisions and take action even in the face of uncertainty. They also understand how to use the tools of persuadability at the right time and how much to invest in them to get good outcomes. In chapter 9, we'll discuss when

it's worth being persuadable, when it's not, and how to be decisive without becoming completely blind to changing circumstances.

Being persuadable isn't just a path to changing yourself or your organization. Leaders who change their minds change the world. We tend to assume that the only way to change the world is to persuade others. But when we examine social movements throughout history we see that it was key leaders who allowed themselves to be persuaded that enabled or accelerated social progress. In chapter 10, I'll show you how one prominent senator's conversion helped advance the American gay rights movement, how a respected French chemist's brave concession led to a paradigm shift in science that would modernize the field of chemistry, and how a young NFL fullback's change of heart may prove to revolutionize football as we know it. In fact, I'll make the counterintuitive argument that changing your own mind, as opposed to changing the minds of others, is often the quickest and most powerful way to change the world.<sup>†</sup>

Of course, persuading others is still necessary to incite change. But while we normally spend most of our time trying to persuade people from other tribes, the research shows that it's our own tribes with whom we have the most influence. That's why in chapter 11 I'll explain how Billy Graham propelled the civil rights movement by taking on his own tribe.

### **My Path to Persuadability**

I wasn't always persuadable—at times I was just the opposite. Four years ago, I wrote a book, *Read This before Our Next Meeting*,

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<sup>†</sup> All examples were included for their applicability and illustrative value—not for any other purpose. *Persuadable* is not aimed at pushing any particular political agenda. I'm not picking a side in a debate; I'm merely trying to set the rules for the debate.

about how big organizations are being overwhelmed by ineffective meetings. As a business consultant, I had seen firsthand how executive calendars were jam-packed with one unproductive meeting after another, leaving little time for real work. I argued that a shocking number of these meetings were being called for the purpose of stalling decisions. When an issue arose in an organization, the first impulse was to convene everyone involved in a room and ask, “What are we going to do?” It was a concession to decision-making anxiety, as we instinctively gather in times of uncertainty, but as I pointed out, this only led to what social psychologists call a diffusion of responsibility. As a result, a decision that should have taken a day to get made would drag on for weeks, or even a month.

My solution was called the Modern Meeting Standard. It was a manifesto whose bias was for action. I encouraged leaders to make a preliminary decision and communicate it to participants in advance of the meeting. The goal of the meeting then would be to come to a final resolution on the decision—but with your preferred path on record, it would add momentum and focus, making meetings shorter and more purposeful.

Most of my readers loved the manifesto. But a few objected. They complained of situations in which my recommended bias for action was misguided. They pointed me to legal scholar Cass Sunstein and his work on the perniciousness of groupthink. Leaders, as the work of Sunstein and others has shown, have an even more powerful impact on their subordinates than I realized. A mere mention of a leader’s opinion can increase conformity and squelch discussion.<sup>15</sup> Good decisions require a robust debate, and that just can’t occur without unbiased, candid opinions.

When I first heard this criticism, I did exactly what I’ve warned you against doing: I immediately dismissed it. In the back of my mind I suspected that my critics might have a point, but I was too scared

to confront that possibility. At that point, my book was in the hands of over 100,000 people. If I changed my mind, my readers would no longer see me as an authority or a leader. Strong leaders stay the course, I thought. Leaders have conviction, and they definitely don't flip-flop.

It was around this time that I happened to pick up *The Finish: The Killing of Osama Bin Laden* by Mark Bowden, which recounts the extraordinary leadership Admiral William McRaven displayed during this highly charged event. McRaven's surprisingly humble and open-minded approach led me to research other successful leaders. The more leaders I researched, the clearer it became to me that great leaders *do* change their minds—and always have. When you peel back the layers of myth-making, you see that the reality of their actions rarely matches the unwavering leader archetype. In truth, almost all great leaders use the tools of persuadability, but today these tools are even more vital than ever.

Inspired by these men and women, I decided to update the Modern Meeting Standard. The new guiding principle: all decisions aren't created equal. Meetings called to address decisions of low consequence should be handled differently than those of high consequence. For low-stakes decisions, speed is more important than accuracy, and leaders should be decisive. As before, leaders make a preliminary decision in advance and communicate that decision to their teams before the meeting begins. (Of course, leaders need to remain open-minded, but their bias should be for speed.) When it comes to highly consequential decisions, however, where accuracy is critical, leaders should be persuadable. To counter groupthink, they should hold off on communicating their preferred decision in advance and actively solicit people's candid and unfiltered opinions, remaining prepared to change their minds.

This new Modern Meeting Standard, which we'll discuss more in chapter 9, proved far more powerful as a result of these revisions. The feedback I received from organizations using the new Modern

Meeting Standard was overwhelmingly positive. The flexibility that the updated standard offered was just what leaders needed to do their jobs. It was so effective that I decided to update the latest version of *Read This before Our Next Meeting* to reflect these changes.<sup>16</sup>

This revelation is what inspired me to write *Persuadable*. I've since pursued a three-year exhaustive research project, poring through hundreds of textbooks and scholarly articles, interviewing leading experts in cognitive science, persuasion, social psychology, and rationality, and analyzing the actions and thought processes of some of the most successful leaders of our time in order to find out the most effective ways to capitalize on the persuadable advantage. The culmination of this journey is a list of seven practices of persuadable leaders, powerful cognitive and behavioral habits, which you can learn to implement to dramatically improve the quality of your business and life. All that's required from you is the courage to read this book a little bit differently than you're probably used to. What do I mean by that?

There's an old story about a psychiatrist and his patient. The patient refuses to eat or sleep, claiming that he's a corpse. The psychiatrist tries time after time to convince the man that he's wrong, but nothing seems to work. One day, the doctor comes up with an idea. He asks the man, "Do corpses bleed?" The patient replies, "Of course not. All their bodily functions have stopped." So the doctor pulls out a needle and pricks the patient's finger, and sure enough—he begins to bleed. The patient looks at his bloody finger with shock and says, "Well I'll be darned! Corpses do bleed."

It's natural to identify with the plight of the doctor. And in most books that teach you how to be persuasive, that's the point. But that's not what this book is about. This book is about being persuadable. When you read this book, you're not the doctor—you're the patient. We are all the patient.

Want to read the rest?

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