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Jonah Berger, author of the book CATALYST and his shocking confession:
"I was the least persuasive person I knew, until I discovered 6-steps for getting anyone to do anything you want. #4 is my favorite and #6 (Which we'll cover today) was too controversial to use in the book!"

Jonah Berger, PhD
Bestselling author of "Contagious"
and most recently "Catalyst"

KEN NEWHOUSE (HOST):

Today, bestselling author of "The Catalyst" Jonah Berger reveals 6-steps for getting anyone to do anything you want. If you're like most people in business today, you've got things that you want to change. For example, maybe you want to change your employee's perspective about the importance of doing a better job. Likewise, maybe you want your social media ads to generate more leads. Similarly, the thought of an easier, more effective sales process excites you. But like everyone else under the sun, you realize that change is hard.

As we get further into the new knowledge economy, it persuading prospects and clients becomes increasingly difficult.

Dr. Berger, on behalf of myself and the members of the Get Clients Now Nation, I want to welcome you to the show today. How are you doing?

Jonah Berger, PhD (Guest):

Good! Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate it.



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KEN NEWHOUSE (HOST):

Jonah, what's something unique, something special that people in the marketplace don't know about you, but you'd like them to know?

Jonah Berger, PhD (Guest):

That's a great question. You know, I think at the core, one trait that I think is a great trait to have is just being curious. And I think, as you get older, it's hard to be curious. You see the world, it's the same world you woke up with in the last morning you woke up today. And as we gain expertise in an area, we think we know more and more. And we often don't notice the things that we don't know about.

For instance, a person told me this once and I thought it was a great piece of advice. They said: "You know, every six months or so, move the paintings or wall coverings, whatever it is around your house. Because you start not to see them", right. The paintings on the wall, but you've seen it so many times in the same place that you essentially move things around and you'll see them in a new light.

And I think that's really great. A great way to think about the world more generally. For example, we're so used to seeing things a certain way. We're so used to thinking that we know a lot about:

Firstly, the domain that we've chosen to work in or to be in.

Secondly, our families, themselves, and ...

Lastly, being curious and being willing to see things from a different light, I think is a, is a great trait to have.

Yeah, that's a really good point. You bring up because curiosity, I think, as it relates to parenting and even with being an employer, I think too many parents and I think too many employers and I can certainly speak for myself. Kind of put the kibosh on the curiosity that our kids have, or the curiosity of our employees, because we want them to focus on something else that we want them to focus on.



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But I do think that there's a lot to be said for allowing those individuals, whether it's a child or in fact, one of your team members to be curious, but having said that, I want to follow up with the next question. Was there a time in your life, or can you remember a time in your life? Where through an instance, or maybe a conversation with someone or through a lesson that you learned that you became incredibly curious, like really dialed in on the topic of wanting to know more about human behavior, what it is about human behavior that causes people or leads people to make the choices that they make.

And then a follow up question is very simply, is there an ethical way? And I know there is because you've outlined it in the book, hence the question, but is there a way a method, a strategy that we can deploy to get people, to take the actions that we want them to take? Yeah. So, you know, I thought I was going to be an engineer.

growing up, I went to a, a, a high school that was a middle school and a high school that was like a magnet school. So it was like a math and science and computer science, sort of magnet school. And so I went to college thinking I'd be an engineer. I wanted to do environmental engineering.

I liked that idea a lot. I get to college, I'm in a class called science technology and society. Which is all about sort of the intersection between science and technology and the world around us. And we're reading this article about how we, the way society is built, buildings shapes the way that families and kids grow up and stuff.

Basic thesis was, Hey, you know, when we live in single story homes, we're comfortable with our kids playing on the street because we can see them easily and we can see them in front of our house. And so they learn and play with the neighbors and so on. But when you live in a big, tall building, It's harder to do that.

Cause we can't see all the way down or we can't see if it's our kid or something else. And so we're less willing to sort of let our kids out. And we're worried about different things that it changes the way we raise our families.



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And I was like, wow, this is super interesting. And I, so I asked the professor, you know, were there other classes that I could take that would fit along these lines?

And they suggested social psychology. and so that's one of the first times that I got really interested in, in this area. I think I'd always been interested in advertising and why people do the things they do. if you went to my dorm room in college, for example, I had a whole wall, as many people probably did at that age with pictures of ads that they love, whether it's the absolute bottle, you know, the Nike ad or whatever it might be.

But those, those classes in that journey really started to encourage me to think about, well, why do people do the things they do? And. Can we apply the same rigorous tools of math and computer science and the hard sciences to the social sciences. Because I think a lot of times we think about whether it's persuasion or why products catch on, or why ideas become popular, gets sort of like lightning in a bottle it's random or it's luck or it's chance, or, you know, I have to be a really persuasive person.

And if I'm not born a persuasive person, it's going to be hard to change people's minds. and I find that success isn't born success is made. How many times have you had a prospect move through your sales funnel, make it to your presentation. A presentation filled with indisputable facts that prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that your solution is best suited to solve their problem.

Your presentations, your webinars, flawless, any sane, successful businessperson could see that as it relates to your prospects, your solution is what they've been praying for. But after you've given your presentation, something happens in fact, Nothing happens in spite of the reality that the facts are on your side, that you clearly have the superior solution, the solutions your prospects have been begging for, they hesitate, they don't buy to your outer shock and disbelief.

They choose to remain with their current vendor, a vendor that only hours or days before they had bitterly complained about. Right. If we understand why



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these things happen, we can make anything catch on. We can change anyone's mind. And so I've really devoted my life, both research wise and academic writing, as well as popular press writing to really sharing the science that shows us that, Hey, if we understand how things work, if we understand the tools, we can really change anything.

Yeah. That's the neat thing about human behavior is that. While we, you know, there's a lot that we don't know about it, it's very, very predictable, much more so than a lot of people understand it to be. And that's why, I really appreciate the work that you've done. A contagious also was just a fabulous book guys.

Matter of fact, guys, I'm going to do this. I'm going to guarantee it's been such a long time. And I'll say this since I read his first book, but contagious, I'm gonna guarantee that one as well. So I think they would go well together, but certainly, let's talk about the catalyst. With respect to the catalyst, what's it about?

What's at the heart of the book. And my second question and the follow up question to that is why to write it. Yeah. So, let me even take a step back further and talk for a minute about contagious. Cause you mentioned contagious. So, at heart I'm an academic. so I have a PhD from the Stanford graduate school business in marketing.

I write academic articles. I teach at the Wharton school. I teach our introductory marketing course. I love research. I love the nitty gritty of data, statistical analysis and all those sorts of things. So, a few years ago I came out with my first book. contagious. and that book changed my life. before that book, I would love to say that everyone called me on the phone and asked me to speak and do consulting.

I would be lying, once in a while someone asks for some help, but it was really few and far between as is the case with most academics. But that book came out and. Everything's sorta changed. So suddenly I was getting calls from the companies like the Googles and apples and Nike's of the world to small



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startups, B to B, B to C, as I think we mentioned I've done some work in the dental industry with den supply and, and others.

and I was really getting a chance to see how business works in a lot of different industries, both sort of consumer packaged goods, but technology goods and expensive services and ideas and political campaigns and everything in between. And I learned a lot about marketing. I learned a lot about how business is being done in today's day and age.

It really opened my eyes. I didn't have as much of a background in actual the nuts and bolts of marketing. but I realized something interesting, which is everyone I was talking to had something in common. Isaac Newton famously noted that an object in motion tends to stay in motion while an object at rest tends to stay at rest.

Sir, Isaac focused on physical objects, planets, pendulums, and the like, but the same concepts can be applied to the business world. Just like moons and comets people and organizations are guided by inertia. And because human beings are creatures who low than certainty and crave autonomy, we tend to do what we've always done.

Whether they were a marketer or a leader or an employee, it might be, they all had something that they wanted to change. So marketers is easy, right? Marketers want to change the consumer's mind or their clients, mind, you know, leaders want to transform organizations, employees want to change their boss's mind.

you know, colleagues at the office want to change someone else's opinion and parents want to change their kids' behavior. Startups want to change industries, nonprofits want to change the world, but change is really hard. Right. Often we push and we pride and we pressure and we control and we try to persuade and nothing happens.

And so the very simple question I started to ask was what could there be a better way? Could there be a different way to change minds and insight actions? It really started me on a journey where I did hundreds of interviews. I look to the academic literature and I realized there's a different way to

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drive change a more effective way to drive change, but we need to think about change differently.

Yeah, that's actually one of the things of the many things that I really enjoyed about the book, dr. Burger is the fact that not only did I learn a lot of new things about persuasion, but the fact that you gave so many different case studies from so many different markets from so many different, I won't say niches, but so many different areas of life that really allowed me to open up my understanding of the things you were trying to teach.

But I'm going to follow that up with a very simple question. Which part of the book did you like writing the least. And then once you answer that, answer, this, which part did you like writing the most? Yeah. So, I think the part I liked the least is it's just, it's hard writing a book. it's hard locking yourself in that room and getting the ideas out, and making sure they're in a way that people can understand.

I think I have the same problem that many of us do, which is we, we, it's easy for us to understand what we like and what we're good at. But as you said, it's hard to know what we don't know. and it's hard to explain things in a way that. Others will resonate with, I think the most enjoyable part was sort of the discovery.

you know, I think we think the change is about pushing. it's more facts, more reasons, more figures, more information. you know, if I just call one more time, if I just, pressure one, we'll make one more meeting. People will come around. indeed when I interviewed hundreds of folks, I said, Hey, what's something you want to change.

What's a way you've gone about to do it. % of the time, we'll use some version of pushing. And it's clear why we think pushing is right, right. If we're in a room and there's a chair and we want to move that chair pushing is a great way to get that chair to go. And if I push that chair, it will move in the right direction.

But when we apply that same technique, that same approach to the social world, there's a problem, which is people aren't chairs. Right? When we push chairs, they go, when we push people, they often push back. They



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often dig in their heels and do the exact opposite of what we want them to do. And so if pushing doesn't work, what does a, and so it turns out, there's something in chemistry that we can learn from.

and so as many of, you know, changing chemistry is very difficult, right? Turning, plant matter into, you know, oil or carbon into diamonds takes millions of years. and so chemists often use temperature and temperature and pressure to make change happen faster and easier. Squeeze something together, increase the heat.

It changes, but there's a special set of substances that chemists use to make change happen. Even faster, even easier. These substances, they don't increase the temperature. They don't increase the pressure. What they do is they lower the barrier to change. They find a way to make the same change happen with less energy, not more.

And these substances are called catalyst and the same idea is valuable in the social world. You know, when we think about the word catalyst, we just think about a change agent. Someone who catalyze change catalyst has a very specific meaning. It's not changed by pushing it's changed by removing the barriers.

If you're like me or better. Like I was a couple of years ago, when you face resistance from your prospects and clients, you react by pushing even harder, always be closing. As they say, you pitch an amazing product, a superior service and the client doesn't buy. So what do you do? You send them even more information, believing that sending more facts and reasons is the solution.

You assume that pushing harder will do the trick that if you just provide more information, more facts, more reasons, more arguments, or just add a little more force. The prospect will come to a census and hire you. If you listen to five, this is it. And yet you stop listening. If you're a listener and to the rest of this, you've got the main idea.

It's about removing barriers. It's not about change by pushing harder. It's figuring out what are those obstacles? Why hasn't someone changed



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already and how can I mitigate them? You know, if you're in a car, for example, you want that car to go. We often think I needed to step on the gas I get in a car. I put my key in the ignition step on the gas.

If it doesn't go, we think we need any more gas. Sometimes we just need to depress that parking brake. Right often if that parking brake is up, there's something in the way that we can step on the gas. So we want, and it's not going to go. And so the book is really about what those five key parking breaks are.

I talk about reactants endowment, a distance uncertainty and corroborating evidence together. They spell, reduce which exactly what great catalysts do. They don't push harder. They don't pressure. They don't cajole. What they do is they figure out the obstacles and they, and they remove them. And so that's the idea of the book, you know, how can we figure out whether we're a dentist, whether we're a marketer, whether we're a leader, whether employee, what is that thing that's preventing change from happening and how by removing it?

Can I get people to change? You know, dr. Jonah, it's interesting that you say that because I've found over the course of my career, that the best, most impactful books, the books that have actually delivered the most value, not only for myself, but for my clients and members are the books that have been able to take those things that are obvious, in fact, so obvious that they are virtually impossible to see.

And in this case, you've done a phenomenal job with that in the book because of the fact that you've taken things that are based % in common sense that are absolutely so obvious that again, they are impossible to see. But having said that, dr. Jonah, given the fact that there are so many people teaching persuasion, you know, I'm a direct response copywriter.

I've been doing that for the last years. And what I would say for the most part, the books that have been written, the work that's been done, the papers that have been published. I've studied them, not everyone, but certainly the really important, really impactful people. And what I see is that there are so many



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different people out there claiming to have the next shiny object, the next new way to persuade and influence.

And here's my question with all these different methods, with all these different experts, claiming to have a way or ways or methods or strategies that are going to effectively allow us to ethically persuade. Other people, namely, in this case, our prospects and our customers, our clients, our patients. Why is it with all of this information out there with all of these different quote unquote proven methods?

So many people are failing when it comes to persuading others? Yeah. I mean, imagine if you went to the doctor's office and the first thing that the doctor did when you got there was say, Oh, nice to see you. Let me put a cast on you. Put a cast on your leg, you'd say, well, wait a second. You don't even know what the problem is, right?

You haven't stepped in to figure out what the problem is before you apply the solution. And I think that is often the problem. When we try to persuade confusion, frustration, and fear emotions you're becoming intimately acquainted with as the resistance to your sales effort, reaches an all-time high in the knowledge economy, pushing prospects no longer works.

Deep down, you see and understand that, but against your better judgment, you push harder only to realize that now your prospects are pushing back. We are often so focused on the outcome we want to achieve and what we can do to try to get someone there that we don't stop to say, well, hold on. What are those barriers?

Right? Why hasn't someone already, whether it's, you know, bought a product or use the service, why haven't they done that? Right. What's preventing them from doing that particular thing. If it's a colleague at my office, well, why aren't they already doing what I want them to do? What's the thing that's getting in the way.

And I think we're so interested in what we want to achieve, that we don't take a step back to do that diagnostic and figure out what's happening. And that's the challenge. Right? We can push all we want. We can add more



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reasons. We can use a lot of different techniques that come out of persuasion that certainly sometimes are effective.

What those techniques do is they just push people more. And what people often do is then they just come up with more reasons why they don't want to do what we're suggesting. Right. People are really good at having what's called persuasion. Radar. Talk about this a little bit in a couple of minutes when we talk about reactants, but they have an ingrained system when they know someone's trying to persuade them, their defenses go up.

And the more we push the higher their defenses go. And so pushing is not going to work, right? Yes. Sometimes once in a while pushing works. Sure. Certainly it does. but most times for, particularly for things that are difficult to change, pushing is not going to work to, to get those things to change.

We have to figure out what the barriers or obstacles are and mitigate them. And I do this when I work with clients, you know? so I was gonna say, Oh, we're doing this or that, but they haven't stopped to say, well, let's take that customer journey. But the customers are real customer, whether it's just a colleague and think about what each stage, what things are preventing them from moving to the next stage, let's identify those barriers.

Let's figure out how to change them and help people move in the right direction. Yes. I refer to that as the sales prevention firewall, that's an ingrained in all of our DNA. I love that. Yeah. I love that fire. That's a nice idea. So as I alluded to in a previous question, dr. Joan, I think it was the question before this one, lots of people out there teaching lots of different methods, strategies, ways to persuade those.

In the marketplace specifically in the business context. And in fact, most of those methods, as we can see, aren't working for people. So based on the work that you did in the book, all the research, and again, you did a tremendous amount of research, which was awesome. But if you found that there's a better way to persuade people, to get them to do what you want to get them to take the action that we want and do it consistently.



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Certainly. Yeah. And to me it's about reducing those barriers, right? So I talk about five in the book. I talk about reactants and endowment, distance uncertainty and corroborating evidence. I don't mean to suggest by the way that those barriers out there, those are the five that I've seen come up again and again, across industries and situations, whether you're trying to change a client's mind or a colleagues or bosses.

Or your kids, these things come up again and again, put them together in an acronym. They spell, reduce which exactly what catalysts do. They don't, push harder. They find those key barriers and they reduce them. They find those key obstacles and they reduce them. And so each chapter is sort of an explanation about, well, what is that barrier?

What is reactants? What is endowment? What's the science behind it. and then some tips and tricks and techniques, again, across different spaces that I've seen work, to mitigate those barriers or, or to reduce them. So dr. Jonah, now that you've said that that actually generates a question for me that I didn't have written in my list of questions for you, but I want to throw it in because I think it's relevant.

So you get to the point where you've actually created this framework, five different methods for generating change in your prospects. Very consistently, very, very effectively. Non-manipulative totally ethical. But what I want to know is that when you figure this out, when you came to that aha moment and realized what you had created.

What was the thing that surprised you most? Yeah, I mean, I think that the biggest surprise for me was a little bit of what you said already, which is, it seems simple. Mean reducing the barriers like you say, and it's like, Oh yeah, figure out what the barriers are reduced them. Like that's a half sentence, but it's so effective and we don't do it.

And I think part of it is our egocentrism part of it's ease, maybe part of it's laziness, but part of it's just, we're so focused on the thing we want to achieve and. Let me be clear, by the way, you know, sometimes you hear about



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people, write books on persuasion. They are the most persuasive person you've ever met.

Right? Like they get up on stage and everyone listens to everything they say, and you just imagine their kids sort of yes. You know, yes, mom or dad, I'll do whatever you want. You know, they're just really persuasive people. I'm not a persuasive person. People don't like being told what to do, even from qualified professionals.

So rather than saying, yes, let's do this prospects are saying, let me think about it or I'll get back to you. When they don't get back to you, if you call them again and again, and again, it doesn't take long before you finally realize they're not going to return your calls. Maybe it's time to ask yourself this question.

If pushing prospects no longer works, what does. It's not that everyone I talked to does everything I want all, all the time. It was really about sort of noticing my own places where I was failing, noticing other places where other people were failing, that these sort of ideas came together. and it's such a simple shift, such a simple approach yet it's quite effective because it really takes into account the audience that we're trying to talk about.

Right. It forces us to say, well, what about them? What are their needs? And by paying more attention to them really makes it easier. So let's do this. Let's take a look at the five elements in your framework. Actually, we don't have time to look at all five, another reason to buy the book and remember, I'm guaranteeing the book contagious as well, but let's do this.

Let's take a look at the first element in the reduced framework, which is reactants. Sure is it okay if I tell a story for a minute? Is that okay? Hey, stories, one of the best ways to communicate persuasively to go for it. Great. let's tell a story about something or talk about a story about something that many of us are familiar with, which are something called tide pods.

so many of you probably know tide pods. Do you throw them in the laundry to clean, to clean your clothes? Let me tell you a story about. A tide pod. So number of years ago, a tide owned by Proctor and gamble was trying



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to figure out a way to make laundry faster and easier. and so they realized, look, what's the challenge.

People get their hands messy. They don't know how much to put in. If we could just come up with like a little tablet that people could throw in the laundry, be easier to do. Yeah. You can release different chemicals at different points in time and do a better job of cleaning clothes. Is that with these tide pods, they spend over a million dollars, a hundred million dollars in marketing, and they hope to take a big chunk of the billion dollar laundry industry.

Okay. So tide pods come out and they do okay. But there's a problem, which is that people are eating them. And I want to pause there for a second. Some of your listeners are probably going, I must have heard him wrong. Right? I mean, he said people are eating them. People aren't eating chemicals, right? I mean, he must mean something else.

No, no people are eating them. People are eating tide pods. So there's a funny video on a major website, a funny article on the onion. And suddenly now young people are challenging each other to eat Thai pods. It's called the tide pod challenge. Now imagine you're a tight executive in that situation, you're sitting there going, well, what are we supposed to do?

People are eating chemicals. They shouldn't do that. And so they do what most people would do in that situation. They tell people not to, instead of continuing to ask, what's going to convince my prospects to say yes to my offer. Perhaps it's time to start asking yourself a different question. One that looks at your problem from a different angle.

Here's that question? Why hasn't my prospect chosen me or my solution already? So they come out with basically a public service announcement saying don't eat tide pods. And in case that's not enough, they hire a Gronk, Rob Gronkowski, a celebrity to post online saying, Hey, don't eat tide pods. It's a bad idea.

So people shouldn't eat tide pods tide makes announcement telling people not to eat tide pods. They think that will be the end of it. The exact



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opposite happen. That's when all hell breaks loose, interest in tide, pods goes up over % visits to poison control, go up as well. essentially a warning became a recommendation, telling people not to do something, made them more likely to do it.

Now you may be sitting there going well, hold on. Right. I'm never going to tell people not to eat tide pods. Of course, I wouldn't do that, but we do the same thing all the time. We either tell people not to do something. so, you know, we tell our kids, Hey, don't touch that. you know, the government just told people, Hey, don't go outside your homes because of COVID or coronavirus, or we tell people to do something, wear a mask, brush your teeth, buy this product or service.

The challenge is that when we put people, they push back. They don't just go along. They, they push back the reason why is something we've alluded to a little bit already, right? I think, can you call it something different, but I would call it sort of the anti persuasion radar. You said something similar, like your phrasing as well.

It's sort of an anti-missile defense system almost that goes up when people realize someone's trying to persuade them. it's, you know, I ignore the message. I avoid it. I put up a barrier or even worse. I counter argue. I think about all the reasons why, what someone's suggesting is wrong. and so the challenge is we're taking by trying to persuade people, we're taking away their freedom and autonomy.

People love to feel like they're in control. They love to feel like they make the choices in their own life. Why did I buy this product? Why did I use this service? Why did I engage in the behavior? I did it because I like it. Because I want to, but as soon as we tell people to do something, yeah. Now it's not clear whether they're doing it because they wanted to where they're doing it, because we told them to, as soon as they can make that attribution while I'm doing it, because someone told whether that person is my parent, where the person is my boss, my colleague, or the governor, suddenly I'm less interested in doing it because it infringes on my belief that I did it for myself.



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And so, because of that, right, we need to stop persuading. We had to stop trying to sell people and get them to buy in. We need to stop persuading people and get them to persuade themselves. And so in the book, I talk about four ways to do this, but the key insight is let's give people back some freedom and control.

Let's stop taking their choice away and forcing them to put up those barriers and let's give them more freedom and control and the journey which will make them more likely to come along. Dr journal let's do this because it wasn't part of my list of questions. Let's take to seconds and break down that first one kind of dig a little deeper.

You mentioned providing a menu and that'll kind of wet our appetite and get us moving in the right direction. Sure. Yeah. So, and I'll talk about this in a, in a meeting context, right? So imagine a meeting with a boss or a colleague or a client you want to change their mind. Okay. So, often what we do is we present one option.

We tell them why this is the best solution, why they should buy this product, use this service, or with an organization, do something in particular. People know, we're trying to persuade them. Yes. They're listening. Yes. Polite, but they're anti persuasion radars up. Right. They know, Hey, you you're telling me I should do this thing, but that's because of you.

You like it. Right. If you're, if you're a consultant pitching me service. Well, of course you telling me the service is good. Cause it's your service, right? Of course you tell me, it's really good. If you're my colleague and you're telling me you should adopt a certain program. Of course you would say that because it's a program you'd like, and so they spend the entire meeting, poking holes in your argument.

Think about all the reasons why, what you suggested is a bad idea. It's going to cost a lot of money. It will be difficult to implement. How are we going to make it work? I'm almost like a member of a high school debate team, right? If they're figuring out why your argument's wrong and it's going to come crumbling down.



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And so what great catalysts do is they don't give people one option. They give them multiple. Give them two, three, maybe even four, because what that does is that shifts the role of the audience. Now, rather than sitting there and thinking about all the reasons wrong with what you suggested now, they're sitting there going well.

He gave me, she gave me two or three options, which of them do I like better, perhaps the key to getting better results. The secret for overcoming your prospect's inertia. Changing their minds and inciting action. Isn't going to be found in you becoming more persuasive or by pushing harder, but by developing the ability to remove your prospects, barriers to change.

And because they're focused on the positives and because they're focused on why they like what they're seeing, they're much more likely to pick one at the end. I call it providing a menu because you're not giving people infinite choice. Right? When you walk into a restaurant, they're not giving you a thousand options, they're giving you a limited choice set.

They're choosing the choice app, but they're allowing you to choose from within that choice because by giving you a choice, You've got that sense of freedom and control right now, I get to pick, but by choosing the choice that they've shaped the journey and parenting experts, talk about this as well.

Right? You want your kid to brush your teeth, brush your teeth. There's going to say no, you say, okay, do you want to brush your top teeth of your bottom teeth? Right? Do you want to brush your teeth first? You wanna put your pajamas on first? You give them choice. Now, suddenly they're thinking about, huh?

Which one do I want to do? And they feel like they've gotten to choose rather than feeling like, well, my parent told me what to do, so I'm not going to do it anymore. So, if you're wondering if this framework will work for you, my answer is a resounding yes, it will work for you. But having said that, you're going to have to invest some time and sit down and think about this, run this through in your mind, ruminate on this framework and what it means and how you can deploy it in your business.



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So dr. John, and my question to you is why is this element in the framework? So critically important to the success of, as an example, a business owner or professional, you know, we work with a lot of dentists and podcasters, a coach. What is it about this particular element? You know, I don't know exactly why you put that just element first in the framework, but it seems to me that it's especially important and I wanted to get your feedback on that.

Yeah. I mean, but that's at the core of, of what the ideas, right? Whenever we try to persuade someone, telling them what to do, we're often telling them whether it's, you know, I'm a dentist brush your teeth and floss, you know, every time people kind of, Oh yeah. How often are you brushing? Everybody says twice a day.

Cause they feel bad about saying otherwise you floss and every day, twice a day. Yeah, of course. We're telling them what to do. And they say, well, Hey, don't tell me what to do. Right. It feels bad. Whether we're talking, getting consulting capacity. This is my solution there. I'm giving. Well, of course you'd say that.

And so it often feels like we're pushing. And so I think reactants, in some sense is the core of why pushing isn't going to work because when we push people's radar goes up and they push back. And so that really helps us understand why we need to reduce barriers in the first place, right. By removing or reducing reactants only then can we make people more like a list by giving them some of that freedom back?

Only then can we make them more open to what we're suggesting again? Not because we told them to, but because we set things up to allow them to come to that conclusion themselves. Right? Talk about some great anti-smoking videos or campaigns against smoking, where they don't tell people not to smoke.

Right. In, in one of these campaigns, I have kids come up to smokers on the street and ask the smokers for a light. And let me tell you, when a kid asks a smoker for life, smoker says no. Right. And what the smoker also does, it tells



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the kids about all the reasons why they shouldn't smoke. Cause it's a terrible idea.

And then at the end, what the kids do is they say, well then why are you smoking? And they walk away in the knowledge economy, success lies in discovering the hidden barriers that prevent prospects from embracing change. When you understand and implement this, you will be imminently more successful at attracting prospects.

Converting them into paying clients and making more sales by identifying the real reasons that keep your prospects stuck and unwilling to move. You can eliminate them.

I, the kids not telling the smoker don't smoke. Cause it's why we say screw you. And I'll tell them what to do. Kids are asking a smoker for a light smoker, spends all this time telling the kid why to smoke and the smoker sits there going well. How, if I'm telling the kid not to smoke, why am I smoking?

Whether the kid did as they highlighted a gap between someone's attitudes and actions. And encourage the person to resolve that themselves. And so a lot of the solutions that chapter really not about pushing, but about encouraging people to persuade themselves, encouraging people, to get to the solution you want them to get to not by pushing them down a path, but by guiding them through a journey, I would say that while this has actually been true over our existence as human beings, getting people to convince themselves is probably now more important than never.

Because of choice. We are inundated with choice and as a result, getting your prospective clients, customers, or patients to actually convince themselves has never been more important than any other time in business. And so using this approach, using this element of the framework, like I said, is more important than ever because after all, if you think about it, we're in business to make a profit on purpose.

What are your thoughts on that? Dr. Jonah? That's a really nice observation. And I don't know if I had thought about it before, but I, once you said it, I certainly agree with you. I mean, not only are we faced with more



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choices, but we're also faced with an onslaught of people trying to change our minds, right?

From the number of emails we get every day to the number of phone calls we get to, you know, even some, pieces of mail in our mailbox, lots of people are trying to convince us of things. And so we've gotten much more used to sort of swatting them down. No. Yeah. Don't tell me that. Don't tell me that. And I'm not even, I'm not even gonna listen in the first place.

And so I think, you know, we have to get people to be open, to listen before they're open to change. I, you know, I certainly talked to lots of business people for this book, but I also talked to lots of folks like hostage negotiators, or substance abuse counselors, or, you know, a rabbi who got someone who announced the KKK and become Jewish, you know, situations where you think there's no way these people would change.

And what a lot of these folks talked about is you really have to get people to be open to change before you try to move them to change. and so that's really the first step. We can't just tell people what we want. We have to make them open to even the possibility of changing before they'll consider what we want them to do.

Okay. So let's do this. Let's go ahead and jump ahead to the fourth element in the framework, and that would be uncertainty. And then if you could tell us what uncertainty is, and then in addition to that, I'd like you to give us a real world example of someone within the marketplace. Who's doing an exceptional job utilizing this fourth element of the framework.

Uncertainty. Yeah. So, anytime we have changed, there's some uncertainty we're asking people to let go of something they've been doing and switch to something new and the challenges it's not just costly to switch to something new, right? It takes money. It takes time. It takes effort. They're switching costs, whether it's buying a new car or using a new service, you don't have to pay money and all those other things.

but the costs are often upfront. You want me to use a new procedure? I have to learn that new procedure and I have to pay for it. You want me to



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buy a new product? I have to pay the money for it, but the benefits are later, right? It's gonna make my business better. It's gonna save me money, but it's not gonna save me money right away.

It's gonna take some months before it saves me money. And that benefit is uncertain. The cost of certain I'm definitely gonna have to pay for this product or service. And the benefit is later and it's uncertain. And let me tell you, most people don't want to give up a certain thing now for an uncertain thing later.

Behavioral scientists, Kurt Lewin, once noted. If you want to truly understand something, try to change it. But the reverse is also true to truly change something. You need to understand it. It wasn't until recently that I stopped making this mistake, the mistake I'm speaking of occurred when I would interact with prospects and clients, my mistake, which was a costly one, was that I was focusing primarily on myself.

I focused on the outcome. I was looking for the change. I was hoping to see, I was blinded by the belief that I was right. That I knew what was best for my prospects when prospects couldn't or wouldn't make the decision to buy. I assumed that if I just provided more information, more facts or reasons they would come to their senses and hire me.

But increasingly over time, things didn't go as planned. That's certainly now may not be great. It may not be perfect. It may not be the best thing out there, but people tend to stick with the status quo in the, in the book. I talk about the status quo bias people stick with what they're doing already, because it feels safe.

Yes. The product or service or way of things that I'm doing already. It's not perfect. But I know what it is. Where's this new thing you're telling me it's better, but I'm going to have to pay all these costs to switch and it might be better, but at night might not be better and I'm going to have to those cost to do so.

I'll just stick with this thing. I know. And so the biggest cost isn't money. It's not time. It's not effort. The biggest cost is uncertainty. I'm sitting there going, yes, you marketer. Yes. You dentist. Yes. You person say your thing is



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better, but how do I know it's actually better? And so I'll just use an example when I talk about it in the book, but I think that illustrates is nicely.

think about this company, Dropbox. So many of us are familiar with Dropbox. It's a cloud storage company that allows us to store files online today. It's big and hugely successful, but it wasn't always that way. When they rolled out, they had a lot of problem getting traction. Why was that? People were uncertain.

It hadn't stored things in the cloud before they used to storing things on their desktop. Of course, Dropbox said they were great, but what if the cloud went down? People weren't used to it. They didn't want to want didn't want to do it. And so they tried sort of paying for advertising or hiring marketing folks that were having some trouble.

So what did they do? They gave it away for free. They said, Hey, anyone who wants to try Dropbox can have two gigabytes for free. And you might say, well, we'll hold on. How can you give away a product or service or you can't make money giving away things for free? What they did is they leveraged something called freemium.

You give away one version of something for free, but then you encourage people. If they like it to pay full price for more premium version, once you hit two gigabytes of storage. Okay, well then you're going to upgrade to the paid version. It's clear why people like free it's free a company. Love it as well.

Why? Because it lowers that barrier. To trial. It makes it easier for people to experience it themselves. Sure. Dropbox is going to say, it's great. It's there. A marketer would say a product is great, but what it does is it makes it easier for people to experience themselves. Hey, it's free. Okay. I'll check it out.

I'll see if it's actually good. And if I've been using it well, then I'll be willing to pay more and you might say, well, hold on, I'm a dentist. I can't do freemium. I can't give something away for free and then have a premium version. But you see this principle all the time. We're broadly test drives for cars.



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What a test drives for cars do there's no freemium there. What it does is say, Hey, you don't want to pay , before you can experience what something is like. I'll let you sit in the car and try it out. And then if you like it, you'll buy it. Think about samples at the grocery store. Think about the little bottles of shampoo or toothpaste you get at a hotel.

What all these things do is they lower the barrier to trial. Not just the monetary cost, but the uncertainty, they allow people to experience an offering and actually see if it's good, because once they've experienced it, no one's going to be better than themselves, at, at saying, well, if I like it, it must be good.

And so sure if your thing is good, whether it's a product or service or idea, figure out a way to give people a taste of it, a sample, a way to use freemi a way to lower the barrier to try because they've experienced it themselves and they like it. They're going to be willing to pay for the full version and bring you more clients, more customers, wherever it may be.

All right. So dr. John, I'm gonna throw you a curve ball here, but from the business owner's perspective, everybody listening to this show, every member of the get clients foundation knows, Hey, I can trust Ken. Ken is telling me that this is an awesome framework that I need to invest in this book and use it.

Everybody also knows at the same time who dr. Jonah Berger is world renowned expert in the field of persuasion and communication. Everybody knows that, but this is where I'm going to need a little help from you. There's no doubt that people who are listening to this are going to invest in your book. I already know that, but what about the business owner who is at that point where they're like, sure I'm going to buy the book, but when it comes to actually deploying this framework within my business, I've got a level of uncertainty that I've got to get past before I'm ready and willing and able to do that.

I know it will benefit my business. Like I said, I trust Ken. I know dr. Jonah Berger. I trust him, but I need you to help me. I'm talking as the business owner now. Dr. Jonah, dr. Ken, I need you to help me get over this hurdle of



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uncertainty in that instance, dr. Jonah, what would you say to that particular individual?

Yeah. So a couple of things. so first, I have a couple appendices in the book, which are really just about starting in the first place. How do you find those barriers? You know, how do you figure out what those barriers are in your own business and your own industry, whatever, whatever it might be.

We tend to have barrier. Blindness barriers tend to be everywhere. We tend not to see them. And so there's a resource there for identifying what those barriers are. but I thought a lot about uncertainty myself. It wasn't until I learned that by focusing on my prospects and clients and by understanding what they really wanted, what they needed, that I was able to transform my results, grow my business and enjoy greater success than I ever thought possible.

you know, whenever I write a book, I try to make sure that I use the principles of the book, to offer the book, because otherwise, if I'm not drinking my own Kool-Aid what would it be? You know, when, when contagious came out, there was a big piece in fast company about me and the book, and it said, you know, he says he can make anything cash on the books, not a New York times bestseller it'll prove his framework wrong.

And so thank goodness. The book was a New York times bestseller. So it all ended well. But I think in this case, I thought a lot about uncertainty. And so, you know, you can go to my website, there are a bunch of free resources. You don't have to pay any money. You can download a guide to Chang your boss's mind changing a client's mind.

You can download a one pager with the framework of a book to give you some sense of how it works. There are certainly resources there to allow people to experience the offering, because I think this is a powerful approach. And what I love about it is anyone can use it. You know, you don't need to be the most persuasive person and you don't need to be a marketing genius.

You don't need to be the most charismatic individual in your office. All you have to do is understand what those obstacles and barriers are. And



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so I think the book, as well as the resources really help people figure that out. And if we understand why someone isn't changing, if we understand why they haven't changed, ready, I think we can change anything.

That's good. That's really good. Hey, listen, I really appreciate being here with me today, but I got one more question. What's the one question that I didn't ask you today, dr. Jonah, but I should have asked it. Yeah. where should we start first? and I think one place to start first is to start with understanding.

and I think, you know, we've talked about this a little bit already. but one of the hostage negotiators I talked to, you really said it really well. He said, you know, negotiators, when they start out, they want to jump the influence. They want the first thing they do to tell someone to do something, put your hands up, you know, don't do what you're doing, come out, whatever it is.

And it just doesn't work. We have to start with understanding. And I think we've talked about that a little bit, but I just want to underscore it. I think if we don't understand the person, the organization, the thing we're trying to change, we're not going to be effective. I can't tell you how many clients or individuals I work with who say, Oh, I tried to change this thing and I didn't, it didn't work.

And I say, why? And they go, well, what do you mean why? And I go, well, why didn't that person change? Why didn't work? And they go, Oh, I don't really know. And if we don't understand the person or organization or thing, we're trying to change, if we don't start with that understanding, it's gonna be really hard to create change.

Dr. Johnny, you mentioned again, Hey, we can go to your website to get all these cool free resources. Find out more about the book, read more about you. So what exactly is the URL because of the uncertainty principle, people will be uncertain. I want them to go there. What is the URL for your website? Yeah, it's just my first name, last name.com.

So Jonah Berger, J O N a H B E R G E r.com. there there's a resource tab there. It has resources for all of the different books, but a bunch of stuff is there. And also, you know, I love answering folks questions. Feel free

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to reach out on LinkedIn or on Twitter at J one burger. All right, well, that's going to be a wrap.

Hey, listen, dr. Jonah, I really appreciate you being on the show today. The book is absolutely phenomenal. The catalyst guys remember. Hundred percent money back guarantee on the book, buy it, read it, deploy what's in the book. Doesn't work magically. You have to deploy it. You will benefit multiples of multiples, not only of the money that you invest in the book to purchase it.

But in the time you invest in putting these principles, this framework into play in your business. So with that, dr. Jonah, thanks again. And we'll be talking to you soon. Oh, thanks so much for having me.



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