

A Unified Model of Advocacy in Perception Space

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Introduction

We use language for various purposes. We describe the world. We ask questions. We issue commands. We make agreements. And we try to persuade. Priests, Rabbis and Imams try and persuade people to believe in and value god. Marketers and advertisers try to persuade people to buy products. Public relations specialists try to persuade people to have positive perceptions of organizations. Political consultants try to persuade people to support causes, and candidates. Legislators try and persuade each other to vote for bills. Executives try to persuade people to work effectively, to agree to a contract, to accept a job, and so on. Parents try to persuade children to listen to them. Attorneys try to persuade people to favor their clients. All those activities have something important in common. Popes and presidents, marketers, advertisers, public relations specialists, political consultants, executives, legislators and lawyers, in fact all of us, are advocates either full time or part time. When we seek to convince someone, we are in the business of practical persuasion, of persuading people to change their minds or do things.

You might expect, given the number of people engaged in advocacy and the importance of what they do, that there would be a comprehensive, well-established theory of how to do it. You would be wrong. There is no such theory. People learn to be advocates by the seat of their pants.

We aim to remedy that. This paper is about developing effective advocacy strategies. It elaborates a novel theory that organizes and systematizes the process of constructing persuasive cases in support of desired conclusions.

In order to understand the nature of our task, let us begin with an analogy. Building a house requires three things. First, there are the raw materials: the wood, mortar and brick, the hammer and nails, the vacant land. Second, there is the architect's blueprint: the plan for putting the raw materials together. And third, there is the know-how: the knowledge and ability to put the raw materials together according to the plan. In advocacy, the raw materials are what we are advocating, whatever it might be. The goal, what we are trying to build, is an effective message, one that will change people's perceptions in the desired way or prompt them to action. But currently, there is no theory outlining the most effective, efficient way of moving from those raw materials to that finished product. We lack the coherent tools and processes common to architects of physical things. There is no blueprint for advocacy, no systematic method for drawing up a plan for advocating an idea, a concept, an ideology, brand, service, or product. And this lack of a blueprint has an adverse effect on the development of advocacy know-how. Advocates are forced to figure out how to build a case for each conclusion as they go along, and must practically start from scratch at the beginning of each new project. Imagine trying to figure out how you are going to build a house while you are building it. It can be done, but only with an extraordinary amount of waste, and with a high degree of risk that the house will be neither beautiful nor livable.

Our goal is to provide a blueprint for advocacy. The theory we present here provides a practical, flexible method for developing persuasive messages. To help develop a feel for how the theory is applied, we provide examples of its use along the way, in the form of theoretical reconstructions of the messages of real, effective advocacy campaigns.

First Principles

Before we begin to outline this new model, there are two principles it is important to establish. The first is the *axiom of clarity*:

When you communicate, it is not enough to communicate so that you can be understood. You must communicate so that you cannot be misunderstood.

This is a much higher bar than most of us are used to. But in order for advocacy to approach the credibility we would like it to have, we have to be more disciplined in our language.

The second is the *axiom of sufficient force*:

Say only those things you need to say to achieve your objective.

Every moment and every cent you spend saying something that you did not need to say to achieve your objective is wasted. It is time you could have spent doing something productive, and money that could have dropped to your bottom line or been spent increasing the reach or frequency of your case in media.

Precision in our advocacy terminology

To a great extent, the credibility gap communicators in advocacy suffer from can be traced to confusion in our language. As truly incredible as it sounds, even among professional communicators, for example, marketers, there is widespread confusion about the definitions of terms such as ‘brand,’ ‘branding,’ ‘strategy,’ and, ‘messaging.’ Professional communicators, at least, should have no excuse for their failure to define their core language to one another. If you fall into this category, or consider yourself an expert in or a student of communication, then step with us into a mindset where words you often use for many concepts have specific and non-overlapping definitions. We have provided a dictionary of terms, a list, if you will, of *dramatis personae* in our theater of advocacy.

A Precise Lexicon for Advocacy

Let us begin with *objects* and *concepts*. A *concept* (generally known in marketing and advertising circles as a *brand*) is the sum of perceptions any given individual or target audience has about what you are advocating. We call whatever can be advocated an *object*. Objects may be artifacts, products, services, ideas, ideologies, candidates, nations, organizations, or institutions to which an audience can attach a label and which they perceive as having value. Objects are objective; concepts are subjective. Concepts are perceptions, and objects are the objects of those perceptions. You buy objects; you buy *into* concepts.

There are two things about the nature of concepts all advocates must understand:

1. A concept is owned by its audience; they determine its value. A logo is not a concept. It is a symbol for a concept. A concept lives in hearts and minds and not, as many suppose, on a piece of paper in an office, or in an artistic rendition of an organization’s or an object’s name.

2. Pre-commoditization, the primary source of perception is the merit of the object. Only after a concept becomes completely commoditized, only after there are a multitude of options, all of which deliver exactly the same functional and emotional benefits, does perception alone become the primary driver of the concept's content. A concept is developed in an interdependent partnership between advocates and object developers, and neither group alone can claim complete responsibility for its success or failure.

Each perception a person holds is supported by conscious or unconscious *reasons* that are either rational, emotional, matters of the credibility of the source, or a combination of these.

Like many aspects of perceptions, reasons can be articulated in language. A *statement* is either a claim or promise. In traditional language, it is either categorical or hypothetical. And it is either true or false. Aspects of a *desired perception* can be articulated in a statement we want the audience to believe after we have exposed our messages to them. A *case* is a set of reasons that support the acceptance of such a statement and thereby of a desired perception.

A Theory of Concepts

What's in a name? A great deal. Suppose you were offered a choice between every property and franchise—all the bricks and mortar—currently owned by McDonald's, but without the name, or the name, without the bricks and mortar. Which would you choose? There is certainly an argument for taking the name. That in itself suggests that its value of the concept is worth roughly as much as all the tangible assets combined. But what is a concept? Surprisingly, there is little consensus about that. And if we do not know what a concept is, we cannot figure out how to shape one.

Any broad advocacy communications strategy needs to address three questions:

1. *Who* are we?
2. *What* is our object: our product, organization, idea, candidate, etc.?
3. *Why* should people change their perception of it?

The first two of those questions concern concepts. The first concerns the concept of the person or organization engaged in advocacy. The second concerns the object concept. Establishing and strengthening concepts for advocates and objects is arguably an advocate's most important job. It affects not only current dispositions toward objects but also the credibility of all future messages.

Concepts are important because they govern what people think of you, your ideas, your organization, your objects, and your advocacy communications. Your concept, in other words, affects everything you say, do, and sell. It affects your own ability to shape your concept, for it establishes or undermines your credibility.

We have defined a concept as the sum of the audience's current perceptions of the object. You, for instance, exist as an object. Your personal concept exists in the perceptions people have of you. You market your concept to all the people in your life, just as organizations market their concepts to their various constituencies. We can express the point in a form that makes it easier to see how concepts are built, strengthened, weakened, and destroyed by putting it this way: *A concept is expressed in a definition of an object.* It is the current perception of what the object is. If concepts are expressed in definitions, then they give meaning to names. They are capable of

conveying promises, images, personalities, status, emotional characteristics, and subjective qualities. But definitions, unlike most of these other things, have a definite and well-understood structure. Treating concepts as expressed in definitions thus gives us a way of understanding them and developing a general model of them.

To establish a concept, we have to establish a definition. To put Aristotle's formulation of definitions in our terms, a concept can be expressed as follows:

Concept = Category + Differences

To define something, in other words, is to place it in a more general category and then indicate how it differs from other things of that category. This gives us a straightforward, two-stage analysis of how to establish a concept.

1. *Locate your object in the proper category.* People have to know that you and your object exist. And they have to be able to identify the general kind of thing your object is. So you have to know what field you are in, and communicate this to your audience.
2. *Differentiate your object from the rest of the things in that category.* What are your object's distinguishing characteristics? What makes your object unique? How does it differ from its competitors?

To locate your object in the proper category, first, *establish that category*. Sometimes, this is easy; there is already a well-established category. You can locate yourself by using that category or comparing yourself to other objects already located there. Sometimes, however, you have to define the category. Your mission or object may truly be new.

Here is an example: Liberals. The category is people with political opinions or positions. Another, corporate example: Lifesize Communications, "the high-definition video technology company: Do more. Travel less. Be present." That slogan places Lifesize firmly in a relatively new general category.

To differentiate yourself from the rest of the category, you then have to establish differences within the category. To think about how to do that, put aside perceptions for a moment, and think about differences intrinsic to the objects themselves.

Intrinsic Differences

How do you establish your object's intrinsic uniqueness in a field of similar objects? There are various ways of differentiating yourself and your objects. With a nod to Aristotle, we can classify the intrinsic differences between objects, physical or nonphysical, into five groups:

1. Differences in Materials
2. Differences in Structure
3. Differences in Process
4. Differences in Function
5. Differences in Engineering

Let's begin with *materials*. You can differentiate an object in terms of what it is made of. You can argue, for example, that your objects are made from better ingredients or components than your competitors' objects are. If you are marketing the "you" concept, you can speak to your lean,

muscular physique, your lineage, or possibly your very DNA. To take a product example, Ivory Snow established itself as the soap that is “99 and 44/100 percent pure.” This is a differentiation based on materials, and it lends itself easily to cases built on that very difference. Soaps with no impurities wash better and are gentler on the skin as well as on clothing.

Materials need not be physical. They can be components of any kind: the meaning and content of a message, the items of knowledge that make up someone’s expertise, the distinctive components of a person’s personality, etc. You might differentiate an organization by pointing to the special characteristics of the people in it. We generally differentiate mathematical theories by the objects in their intended models: number theory, set theory, category theory, the theory of functions of a complex variable, and so on.

You can also differentiate an object on the basis of its *structure*—its form, design, shape, format, or layout. As with materials, this differentiation lends itself to making a case for the object on the basis of the difference. There are organizations that distinguish themselves as clockmakers by the elegance and simplicity of their designs. To recognize that feature is to recognize a reason to buy their objects. There are no clockmakers, in contrast, who distinguish themselves as the makers of triangular clocks, for that distinction provides no reason at all to buy their objects.

Again, structure need not be physical. You might differentiate an organization on the basis of its organizational structure. (Think of just-in-time inventory strategies, for example, or flat organizational structures.) You might differentiate an idea, hypothesis, ideology, or theory on the basis of its logical structure.

You can differentiate an object on the basis of the *process* by which it is produced. Sometimes, the idea is that the process produces a better object. People can present themselves on the job market as Ivy-League-educated engineers, for instance, even if what they learned in college was exactly the same material a student from a state university learns. Keystone Light brands itself as cold-filtered beer, to distinguish itself from heat-pasteurized beers; heat is thought to weaken taste. Sometimes, however, the process is thought to fulfill other goals; consider Fair Trade Coffee. The process of its production does not result in better coffee, but it does promote social goods. The same is true of “socially responsible” investments and “green” objects of various kinds.

You can also differentiate an object according to its *functions*—according to what it does, the roles it plays in larger structures or systems. We can differentiate a theory as explaining why other theories approximate but only approximate the truth, for example. We can differentiate a computer by its processing speed. Functional differences can include social functions and roles. Coffee, for example, plays a unique social role. Drinking coffee is the focus of a variety of forms of casual socializing. That fact can differentiate the local coffee shop as the location of choice for meetings with friends, first dates, etc.

Finally, you can differentiate an object based on its *engineering*. To some extent, this includes the previous elements, incorporating materials, structure, process, and function. But the emphasis is on the distinctive combination of these elements. Engineering is a matter of producing the object by the right process, using the right materials, in the right structure, for the right function. Developing a structure appropriate to the intended function, choosing materials appropriate to that structure and function, and designing a process effective for fitting the materials into the structure go beyond any one of these elements and may be sources of differentiation. The more complex the object, the more important engineering becomes. VW’s recent campaigns, focusing on the allure of German engineering, are excellent examples of this genre.

Like materials, structure, process, and function, engineering need not be a physical process. Einstein's theory of general relativity had such an enormous and immediate impact because of the dramatically new way that it combined a set of concepts, a logical structure, and a process of hypothesis testing.

The Axes of Perception

We have classified intrinsic differences between objects. That is a vital task. Advocacy begins with intrinsic differences; you cannot advocate effectively if you do not know what you are talking about. The aim of advocacy, however is to change *perceptions* of objects. So, advocacy relates most directly not to intrinsic differences but to *extrinsic* ones: differences in how objects are perceived. To understand extrinsic differences, we have to understand perceptions and how to affect them.

In order to develop a theory of constructing persuasive cases, we must first understand the three paths down which a case can move a current perception toward a desired perception. The ancient theory of persuasion finds the key to persuasion in three factors, captured in the Greek terms *logos* (Reason), *ethos* (Source Credibility), and *pathos* (Emotion). Each perception someone holds is supported by conscious or unconscious reasons that are either rational, emotional, matters of the credibility of the source, or a combination of these. We persuade by giving reasons articulated in statements. But we also persuade by relying on the credibility of the source and by evoking feeling. Aristotle, the founder of logic and rhetoric, said, "Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion."

At this point in history, the fields of advocacy, logic, epistemology, and rhetoric are separated by tradition, professional bias, and a false perception of a lack of practical applicability. We strongly assert that they are not separate. Their unification is vital, if not to the academic community, then certainly to advocates. We should unite them to understand how our own perceptions are formed and to advocate our causes and cases with greater clarity and less ambiguity. We can then judge our own perceptions with a greater understanding of their reliability and value.

Perception Space

We can use the categories of Reason, Source Credibility, and Emotion to analyze any perception. Every perception rests on reasons. Every perception has sources. Every perception carries some emotional content. We can measure the strength of support that Reason, Emotion, and Source Credibility lend to a perception. *Every perception can be plotted on the three axes of perception.* Every perception therefore has a location in what we will call *perception space*.

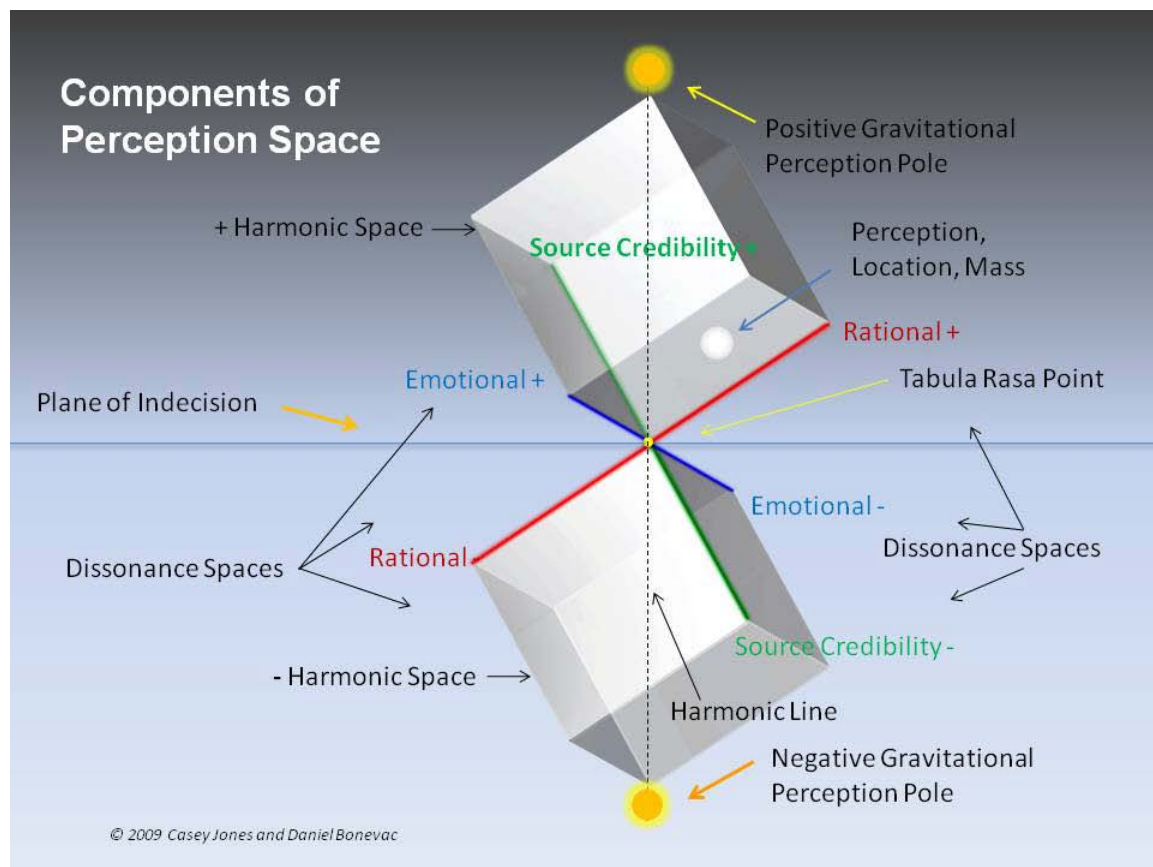
Judging the degree of support a case makes purely on the "reason" dimension, which is by far the most thoroughly investigated, requires assessing the audience's confidence in the reasons being advanced, the importance they assign to them, and their evaluation of the strength of the connection between those reasons and the desired conclusion. It also requires assessing the availability of other reasons to hold, or not to hold, a given perception. Typically, people have some reasons that tend to support a perception or action and others that tend to undermine it. Those competing reasons have to be balanced against one another to determine the net strength of the rational support for a perception.

The same is true for emotion and source credibility. We must understand the balance of emotions consonant with a perception with the emotions that clash with it. We must take into account considerations that count in favor of the source's credibility as well as those that count against it. In all three dimensions we represent the net support for a perception, which generally requires balancing considerations on different sides of the issue.

We can measure someone's degree of commitment by developing metrics for these dimensions. We can then plot them on a three-dimensional grid. Consider a simple system of axes, each of which corresponds to a dimension of persuasive power. By measuring the degree of support for a perception in each of these three dimensions, represented as x , y and z axes, we can assign it a point. The ideal for an advocate, of course, is to communicate a case that leaves the audience's perception strong in all three respects, rating strongly positive in reason, character, and emotion.

It is more intuitive to rotate the space so that something strong in all three dimensions appears at the top. In the figure below, the ideal is at the top point. The higher cube represents perceptions that are positive in reason, source credibility, and emotion. The lower cube represents perceptions that are negative in all three respects. Many, of course, are mixed—strong in one dimension and weak in another. They occupy positions in the space that are not in either cube.

Here is a diagram of perception space. We will discuss each component in turn.



The top vertex of the higher diamond represents the ideal—a perception supported by a rationally compelling set of reasons from a source with very high credibility that mobilizes an intense and lasting emotion. The bottom vertex of the lower diamond represents the opposite—a perception

that flies in the face of the evidence the audience has, with sources they distrust, that clashes with their emotions.

It is important to note that every individual holding a contrary or contradicting opinion views that opinion as “positive.” We use positive and negative symbols and language in our model only to denote “oppositeness.” Different audiences start with different perceptions that have different reason sets. They may start from different evidence, have different emotional responses, and trust different sources.

The plane of indecision

To devise a single metric for the persuasive potential of a case as well as the degree of commitment of a perception, we can imagine a horizontal plane through the origin dividing the diamonds. *The plane of indecision* is the set of all perceptions equally distant from both the highest and lowest point. This includes perceptions that end up neutral because of considerations of one kind balancing considerations of another kind, even if they are not neutral in each individual respect.

The plane of indecision is the set of all perceptions equally distant from full commitment in one direction and full commitment in the other. Someone on the plane of indecision on an issue is neutral; the rational, emotional, and source credibility considerations pulling them in one direction precisely balance, overall, those pulling them in the other. Individuals’ perceptions may be based on completely divergent reasons, which place them on or near the plane. So, even though they are all equally neutral, they can in fact be located in completely different regions of perception space.

There are several advantages to developing a metric for persuasive potential and degrees of commitment. It makes it possible to characterize more accurately what the target audience’s current perceptions are. It makes it possible to study the effects of improvements in one or more dimensions more precisely. It makes it possible to estimate the overall gain in effectiveness from improving the quality of our persuasive cases by improving rational or emotional appeal or improving the credibility of the source. And it makes it possible to study the strengths and weaknesses of advocacy campaigns, briefs, strategies, and tactics objectively.

Perceptions lying on the plane of indecision are neutral overall. But they may not be neutral on every dimension. A perception may rest on a credible source while nevertheless contradicting available evidence and having little emotional appeal. As long as rational, source credibility, and emotional factors cancel each other, the perception inhabits the plane of indecision.

The Tabula Rasa Point

At one special point on the plane, however, rational considerations cancel one another. So do emotional considerations, and so do considerations involving credibility of sources. That point is the origin. Though this is one point, infinitesimal in extent, it is also in one sense infinitely dense, since there are infinitely many issues of which any given person is completely ignorant and thus has no perception at all. For this reason, we call the origin the *tabula rasa* point, the blank tablet on which further experience and communications can write. The area around the *tabula rasa* point is densely populated with things you do not know much about and do not care much about.

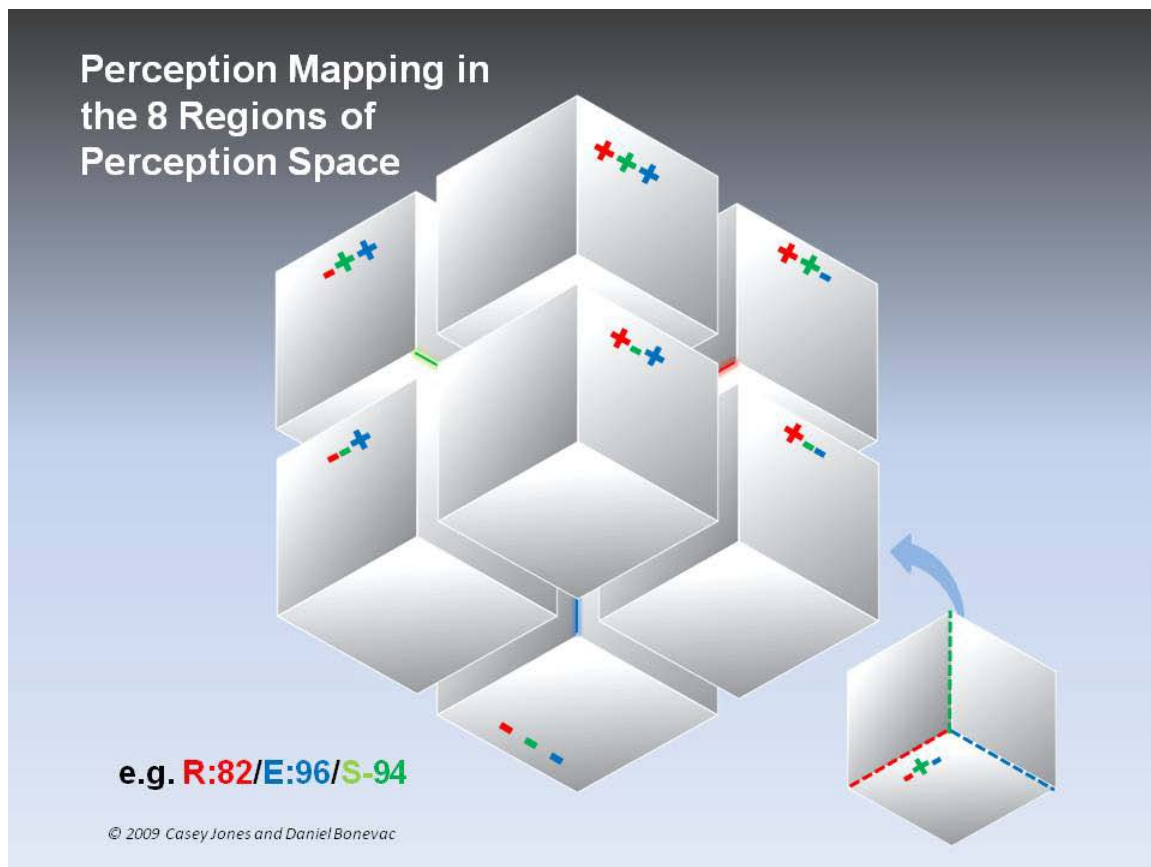
The *tabula rasa* point is important for two reasons:

First, it represents the *null perception*—the perception consisting of no rational, credibility-based, or emotional factors—that corresponds to a universal starting point. If you have not heard of an object, have never thought about an issue, etc., then you are at the *tabula rasa* point. Though it is theoretically possible for someone who has heard of an object to occupy the *tabula rasa* point, with a perfect balance of considerations on every axis, it is very unlikely.

Second, for reasons we explain shortly, the *tabula rasa* point is a point of equilibrium. Like other points on the plane of indecision, it is equally distant from positive and negative poles, balancing considerations for and against an issue. But it alone on that plane involves no tension between factors of different kinds. Every other point on the plane of indecision has a positive value on one of the three axes of perception balanced by a negative value on another. The *tabula rasa* point, in contrast, is free of that kind of conflict.

Dissonance Spaces

The two cubes pictured above share the second feature of the *tabula rasa* point. They have the special feature that there is no conflict between the axes of perception. In the top cube, perceptions rate positive in all three dimensions. In the bottom cube, they rate negative in all three. We call these cubes *harmonic spaces*, for reason, emotion, and credibility factors harmonize in them. All three work together in these perceptions. They all tend in favor, or they all tend against. Below is a diagram of all eight regions of perception space:



Outside the two cubes—and on every point on the plane of indecision except the *tabula rasa* point—there is conflict. Each perception in these spaces exhibits one of the following kinds of conflict. Each kind of conflict involves cognitive dissonance between considerations of different sorts. For that reason, we call these *dissonance spaces*.

Putting these elements together, we can think of perception space as consisting of eight cubes: two harmonic spaces (one positive, one negative) and six dissonance spaces, exemplifying one of six kinds of dissonance:

1. R+, E+, S-: Reason and emotion favor the perception, but sources lack credibility.
2. R+, E-, S+: Reason and source credibility favor the perception, but emotion works against it.
3. R+, E-, S-: Reason favors the perception, but emotion works against it, and sources lack credibility.
4. R-, E+, S+: Emotion and source credibility favor the perception, but rational considerations oppose it.
5. R-, E+, S-: Emotion favors the perception, but rational considerations oppose it, and sources lack credibility.
6. R-, E-, S+: Sources are credible and support the perception, but reason and emotion work against it.

We can use perception space to figure out where the audience is now, where we would like them to be, and how best to move them. Dissonance spaces are especially valuable in this regard. Musical dissonance is uncomfortable; people want it to resolve into harmony. Dissonance spaces are similarly uncomfortable. Someone experiencing a conflict between considerations of various kinds wants to remove conflict.

Thinking about dissonance spaces gives us a much more fine-grained analysis of the target audience than advocates such as marketers and political analysts often make. The “undecideds” are not all alike. Some are close to the *tabula rasa* point, having little inclination either way on any dimension. But some are far away from that point. They have strong reasons of one kind in favor and strong reasons of another kind against. To know how to move the undecideds in your direction, you have to know why they are undecided and address the factors pulling them away from you.

There is one more component we have to address before thinking about how to move a perception from one position to another. That component is the measure of how strongly any perception is held, regardless of its location, and whether the person holding that perception influences others around them.

Two Types of Perceptual Mass

Every perception has a location in perception space. It also has mass. In physics, mass is resistance to force; the more mass an object has, the more force it takes to move it. Mass also exerts gravitational force on other masses. In perception space, we need to keep these two notions of mass distinct. The more *personal mass* a perception has, the more difficult it is to move it. The more *influential mass* a perception has, the more force it exerts on other perceptions—perceptions of that perceiver or of other people.

The personal mass of a perception depends on a number of factors, including:

The kind of person you are. Some people hold opinions very firmly and are unwilling to change them. Such people have perceptions with relatively large mass. Other people have perceptions with relatively little mass. They change easily in response to additional information. Some individuals, as experiments in hypnosis confirm, are or can be made dramatically more susceptible to suggestions.

How much you care about an issue. If you care greatly about an issue, your perception of it tends to have a large mass. If you care little about an issue, your perception will respond much more readily to new information.

How long you have held a given perception. The longer you hold a perception, the more mass it accumulates. If a perception has been acquired recently, it is much easier to affect it with new information.

Your particular biochemical or hormonal status. Many perceptions have or acquire more or less mass based on an individual's body/mind chemistry. Scientists have long proven, for example, that certain substances make people more susceptible to suggestion. Certain mental and emotional states can destabilize an individual's or a group's perceptual gravitational field.

Perceptions also exert force on other perceptions. Perceptions attract one another. A perception surrounded by other similar perceptions will tend to become more like them, and will be harder to move away from them; accomplishing that requires overcoming not only the perception's own resistance to force but also the gravitational force exerted by other nearby perceptions. This explains a variety of phenomena:

Peer pressure. The perceptions of others exert a gravitational attraction on our perceptions, pulling them toward them.

Stability in groups. It is much easier to persuade one person in isolation than an entire group, if the group starts out negatively disposed toward the desired perception. If the group starts out positively disposed, however, it is easier to persuade the group than any one member individually.

Confidence and influence. People whose perceptions have large mass often exert more force on others around them. It may be worth exerting the additional effort to move them, therefore, because their perceptions also attract others.

Perceptual Motion

By understanding the location of the target audience's perception, we can better understand how to move it further toward the desired commitment. Our model so far predicts that it is easier to move someone's perceptions in the direction of other perceptions (of themselves or their peers) and harder to move them in the opposite direction. But we need an additional component to explain two other features of perceptual motion.

Imagine a large body—a star, say—at both positive and negative poles of perception space. Those bodies are equally massive, and exert gravitational force on everything in perception space. At the plane of indecision, the attraction of the positive star balances the attraction of the negative star, and pulls perceptions neither up nor down. Above the plane of indecision, however, the attraction

of the positive star is greater than that of the negative star, and pulls perceptions toward the positive pole. Below the plane of indecision, the negative star exerts more force and so pulls perceptions down toward the negative pole.

Gravitational force in perception space, as in physics, obeys an inverse square law. So, the closer a perception is to the positive pole, the stronger the positive attraction pulling it even higher.

Our model of perception space explains critical features of perceptual motion:

Confirmation bias. The more committed a person is, the more they attend to evidence, emotional reactions, and sources that reinforce their point of view, and the less they attend to anything that might challenge their point of view. The closer someone is to the positive pole, the greater the attractive force of the pole, and so the easier it becomes to move them further toward the pole, and the harder it is to move them away from it.

Conflict avoidance. We have pointed out that dissonance space is an uncomfortable place to be; considerations of different kinds conflict with one another. The farther one is from the line connecting the two poles—the *harmonic line*—the more uncomfortable dissonance space becomes. If rational considerations overwhelmingly support a perception but emotional factors overwhelmingly clash with it, for example, to resolve the conflict a person will tend to look for emotions that might support reason and reasons that might support emotion, thus lessening the conflict and moving the perception toward the center.

Our model predicts this. On the plane of indecision, positive and negative vertical components of gravitational attraction from the pole stars cancel. But there is a net horizontal force that moves the perception toward the center. Earlier, we said that the *tabula rasa* point is uniquely stable on the plane of indecision. We can now see why. It is easier to move a perception toward the harmonic line connecting the poles than away from it. The harmonic line intersects the plane of indecision precisely at the *tabula rasa* point.

Pressure to move toward the center is not confined to the plane of indecision or even dissonance space. People with more rational considerations in favor of a perception than emotional or source-based considerations will tend to seek out emotional experiences and other people who confirm their rational conclusions. People with strong emotional responses will look for reasons to justify them and other people to confirm them.

Now that we understand perception space, we can start talking about how to move perceptions through it.

Strategies for Advocacy

The essence of advocacy is *persuasion*. Here is how advocacy specialists generally think about persuasion. Think of a target audience as having some perception of the object, even if it is the null perception (that is, they have never heard of it). The advocate wishes to convert that perception into another perception, which is the desired outcome of the communication. Arguably, this is true, not only of advocacy, but also of every other form of communication. The speaker wants to have an effect on the audience, changing their current state of mind to another state of mind.

This model is fine as far as it goes, but it raises three large questions:

1. What, exactly, is *A*, the current audience perception?
2. What is *B*, the optimal desired audience perception? There are many places you can take the audience. Which is the most effective in the long term?
3. How do we move the target audience from *A* to *B*?

Many modern consumer researchers and messaging strategists are concerned with *A*. Very few people think about point *B*: Of all the possibilities, which is optimal? And there is no current comprehensive theory of how to move an audience effectively and efficiently from *A* to *B*.

In the ancient world, however, there was a theory of perception and persuasion. It was well-developed for its time and stood virtually untouched for centuries. It included analyses of audience and emotion under the heading of rhetoric. It also included a theory of constructing cases. How do you persuade people to do something, change their opinions, or shift their perceptions? *You give them reasons to do it.* Any model of persuasion and perception thus rests on a model of reasons. It was true for Aristotle and Cicero, the fathers of our field, and it remains true for us.

Think of advocates as giving reasons for changes in perception. The advocate frames a set of statements and reasons for believing them to move the audience from their current perception to another perception. These statements makes a case for adopting that perception—for seeing things the way the advocate wants the audience to see them. A well-crafted case gives members of the audience reasons to change their minds.

If we can locate the target audience's current perception in perception space, we can craft strategies for moving it toward the positive pole. Our model reflects a new conception of the task of advocacy, providing a guide to constructing strategies for advocacy. There are several steps in the process of strategy construction:

1. Identifying the target audience.

We have been speaking as if the target audience is already given. But of course one must *choose* the audience to be targeted. We may think about the choice, and gain traction on the problem of market segmentation, by thinking about regions in perception space. People high in the positive harmonic cube are already strongly attracted to the positive pole; unless forces are acting on them to drive them away from the pole, they are relatively easy to maintain at a high level of commitment. People low in the opposite harmonic cube are strongly attracted to that pole; it takes a great deal of force (and therefore time or money) to drive them away from it. On or close to the plane of indecision, attractive forces are likely to be more closely balanced. The net effect of applying force to such perceptions is thus likely to be high.

There is also an existing force pulling people away from the edges and toward the middle—away from conflict and toward harmony. Taking advantage of that force by identifying audiences experiencing conflict and trying to resolve it in your favor is thus a powerful way of accomplishing more with less force. Mass, of course, is also relevant; it is easier to move less massive perceptions than more massive ones.

2. Identifying the target audience's current perceptions and their locations.

Once we have identified a target audience, we must identify the perception or perceptions we desire to change. We need to locate each perception in perception space. So, we need to know not only *what* the audience thinks but also *why*. We need to catalogue the conscious and unconscious reasons for the current perception, articulating the rational, emotion, and source credibility factors underlying it. If the perception of the audience is in motion, we need to understand why it is moving.

3. Distinguishing ways of moving a perception toward one pole (typically, the positive one).

Once we have identified the current perception of the target audience and its location in perception space, we can begin to distinguish ways of moving the audience's perception toward the desired pole. We want the audience, typically, to be more likely to agree with us, buy the product, vote for the candidate, support the cause, etc. (In negative advocacy, of course, we want just the reverse; we want the audience to be *less* likely to agree with our opponent, buy the product, vote for the candidate, support the cause, etc.) We can move the perception toward the pole in a number of different ways by appealing to reasons of different kinds. Rational appeals will move the perception in one direction; emotional appeals in another. We may choose to emphasize strengths or address weaknesses, add factors contributing positively or remove factors contributing negatively, and so on. If the perception we wish to move is contested by anyone, advocates for a competing object, for instance, we must understand the compelling reasons, rational or emotional, and the sources of those reasons and their strength, in order to best effect change ourselves.

4. Identifying gravitational forces acting on the current perception or perceptions.

Once we have distinguished ways of moving the perception toward the desired pole, we need to identify any gravitational forces acting on the perception. This includes not only the vertical and horizontal forces generated by the pole stars themselves but also the gravitational forces of other perceptions in the vicinity. (Theoretically, all perceptions exert gravitational force on all other perceptions, but, because of the inverse square law, the effects fall off quickly and can be ignored for all but the closest and the most massive.) Related perceptions of the audience, their peers, and sources they encounter are relevant, as are certain weighty perceptions of general significance that we will discuss later. If the audience's perception is already in motion, the speed and direction of the motion is a vital clue to the forces acting on the perception now.

5. Evaluating the effects of applying forces in various directions.

Once we have identified ways of moving the current perception and the gravitational forces as well as forces likely to be applied by friendly and opposing advocates, we need to evaluate the net effects of applying forces in various directions. Forces that propel a perception in the general direction of other massive perceptions have greater effect than those that try to propel an object away from them. So, moving the desired perception toward the nearest pole, toward other weighty perceptions, and toward the center, away from conflict and toward a balance of reasons sets on different axes, tends to have greater effect than doing the opposite.

6. Identifying ways of adding mass to the perceptions on the side you seek to advocate.

Sometimes, the goal of a message is adding mass to an already existing perception. Someone whose perception is already near the top of perception space may not be worth moving even closer to the pole; there is a natural gravitation to the pole anyway. But it may be worth adding personal and influential mass to their perception, not only so that they are harder to move away from the pole, but so that they exert more force on people's perceptions around them.

This may be true not only for people near the pole but also for people closer to the plane of indecision. Consider some people who favor your object, but are not far toward the harmonic pole on the positive side of the plane of indecision. Most of their perceptions of the object, say, come from their own object experience. But conversation, debate, dialogue, advertising, or any other form of communication can have an effect on their perception nevertheless. It may give them further reasons to buy the object again or to confirm that they made the right decision, thus expanding their reason set. But it may also simply confirm their initial reason set, increasing the mass of the perception. That makes it harder to move, helping to keep the person on the positive side of the plane of indecision. It also makes it exert greater force on other nearby perceptions. That force may be effective at generating new sales because of its proximity to the plane of indecision. If you are undecided, you may be influenced more readily by someone who is not far from indecision than by a true believer.

We have been speaking of perceptual motion. But sometimes the advocate's goal is simply to add mass to the audience's current perception. We may change the audience's state of mind not by getting them to adopt a new proposition or even getting them to accept additional reasons for a conclusion but by reinforcing that conclusion in another way—by reminding them of their perception and the reasons for it. Their perception remains in place; it simply has more mass.

There are other reasons why a perception may have mass. The person holding it may be cognitively resistant to change, for instance; they may be dependent on that perception in some way, and they may have identified themselves with it. It may also be a perception in a linked set of perceptions. If they change one, they might have to change others strongly associated with their self image.

How do we, as communicators, intentionally add mass to a perception? The most important means is repetition, reminding the audience of reasons they already hold to be true. *Increased familiarity leads to increased mass.* Increased familiarity, moreover, requires little communication; it may involve nothing more than hearing the idea repeated or, if it is a commercial product, seeing the object in a television show or movie, or hearing it mentioned, or seeing its name. In the right context, this exposure also creates positive emotional associations, thus adding to the reason set as well.

A second means to adding mass is to *add importance*. Perceptions of important matters tend to be more massive than perceptions of trivial matters. *The gravity of a perception depends on the gravity of the issue.* Weighty issues lead to weighty perceptions. So, we can add mass by adding to the importance of the question. We can convince people that the issue matters.

Advocates must be cautious, however. They often mistakenly add mass to perceptions on the “wrong” side of the plane of indecision. You may move an audience further along a single axis, yet create or reinforce conflict on another. For instance, you may prove a point, but they may not like you for it. If how they feel about you matters, it may be a net loss. Striving to advocate

without understanding all three axes can reinforce or add mass to negative perceptions. Adding importance tends to be double-sided: it adds mass to perceptions below as well as above the plane of indecision, making all perceptions on the issue harder to move. So, it is a good strategy for an advocate whose intended audience is already mostly on the desired side of the plane of indecision, but a dangerous strategy for a newcomer.

7. Generating the forces that will move or add mass to a perception: constructing *cases*.

Each case appeals to an audience on all three axes. Even a strictly rational case, made to a very rational person, appeals partly on the basis of its feeling of solidity and the credibility that comes from being the type of case the audience themselves would use. We can think of Reason and Emotion as the two aspects of cases we generally lead with and Source Credibility as a strengthening or weakening factor for every point in a case. We can make rational and emotional cases and support them with credible sources for doing something, believing something, having a perception, changing a perception, or holding a perception more strongly. A case of each kind moves a perception along one or more axes of perception space, and its position relative to the harmonic line and the perception poles is altered by the strength of the sources in support of each point. Our thinking is three-dimensional, and properly so. Human perception cannot reasonably be mapped in simple two-by-two charts.

We can determine the persuasive force of a case by rating its strength on these three dimensions. Each dimension, in turn, is the result of several distinct considerations.

1. *Reason*. How conclusive are the reasons for adopting the desired perception? How much confidence is the audience likely to have in them? Are there relevant but conflicting pieces of evidence or information?
2. *Source Credibility*. How trustworthy is the communicator perceived to be? How credible is the medium carrying it? How much confidence does the audience have in both the source and the medium?
3. *Emotion*. How effectively does the communication produce emotions in the audience that impel its members toward the desired perception? How intense are those emotions? How stable or fleeting are they? Are there other, perhaps reinforcing, perhaps conflicting, emotions relevant to the current or desired perception?

The Structure of Cases

The building blocks of a powerful messaging strategy are statements from which we can make a case for a desired perception. Recall that a case is a set of statements advanced to convince an audience to adopt a desired perception, hold a position more strongly, or perform a desired action. Consider the following diagram:



The top box represents a conclusion, a component of the desired perception or behavior. Think of the highest-level conclusion as a statement of a Claim or Promise. Every statement in support of any desired conclusion, whether a claim or a promise, itself has supporting reasons that testify to its validity.

- 2—5 Statements that support the above Claim or Promise
- 6 – 21 Statements that support statements 2 – 5

All statements asserting that something is either true or false, and all statements asserting a promise (*if this, then that*) exist in a hierarchy of statements whose roots reach down to statements the audience already accepts.

Many support statements are already held to be true by an audience. They can be leveraged in the development and communication of a case. If we must assert more than four vital statements of support for each vital Claim or Promise, our case will be too complex to be understood or our resources too limited to communicate it.

A *Vital Statement* represents what we must say in order for us to succeed in persuading someone to think, feel, or act as we hope they will. To say any more is to be redundant, risk confusion, and waste resources. Sometimes, but not often, we can assert a single Vital Statement, relying on existing perceptions to tip the balance and persuade our audience. Even in those cases, that statement registers with the audience based on its logical appeal, its emotional appeal and the credibility of the source making the statement.

As advocates, we therefore make statements that represent the goal of our communication. Each statement we make is supported (or not) by other statements we make or imply, hoping to plant or change a perception. These statements may be ones we assert or ones implied in the context of perceptions that already exist in the hearts and minds of our audience.

Whenever we make a case for an object, we connect that object to some end which is an intrinsically valuable good. An *intrinsically valuable good* is a good that people want for its own sake, not because it gives them access to something else they want. The general form of every desired perception is: “Object X is the best means to intrinsic good Y, so I should purchase/accept/support X.” To make a case for an object—using Reason, Emotion, or Source Credibility—is to persuade an audience that that object is the best means to some intrinsically valuable good. This is the answer a case gives to the advocate’s third question:

“Why should people change their perception of my object?”

Before we start exploring the ways a case can be built, we need to make some crucial distinctions. There are two ways an object can be a means to an intrinsically valuable end. The object is an *instrumental* means if acquiring and using the object gives you access to the end. The object is a *constitutive* means if acquiring and using the object actually counts as (part of) achieving the end. Money, for example, is an instrumental means to all sorts of ends. Making and spending money gives people access to other goods that they want, but no one (with the lone exception of numismatists) would be interested in money itself—in the paper and the coin—or in the activity of spending money, if they could not exchange money for other things. Eating ratatouille, on the other hand, may be a means to the end of having an outstanding gastronomic experience, but it is a constitutive means rather than an instrumental one. Eating the ratatouille is itself one part of having that experience.

The second distinction is between the object’s primary end and its secondary ends. The primary end of a cell phone, for example, is keeping in touch with other people from wherever you are. Having a cell phone enables you to do that. But there are other ends—enjoyable activities such as taking photos and listening to music—to which a cell phone might be able provide access. If an object is no better at delivering its primary end than its competition is, a case can still be built for it based on its secondary ends.

Lastly, we have to distinguish between the different factors that contribute to an object being the “best” means:

Effective: One way to be the best is to be the most *effective*—to be the means that delivers more of the desired end than any of its competitors, or delivers the end most reliably.

Adaptable: Another way is to be the most *adaptable*—to be a means to more desired ends than the competition, and so give “more bang for the buck.” Objects with several secondary ends are especially conducive to cases that highlight adaptability.

Convenient: Yet another way is to be the most *convenient*—the easiest to use, the most hassle-free. People will often choose something slightly less effective if it is easier to use.

Economical: Finally, a means may be the most *economical*—the best value, and so the option that leaves the most room in the budget for other goods.

To make a convincing case, therefore, is to persuade an audience that an object is the best (in one or more of the senses of “best”) means (whether instrumental or constitutive) to some intrinsically valuable good (whether that good is a primary or secondary end of the object.)

How can we do this? Let’s take a closer look at how persuasive cases are built.

Making a Case

Cases may persuade whether or not they are good, logical, reasonable, etc. But good cases are more likely to persuade. As Aristotle observes, “Things that are true and things that are better are, by their nature, practically always easier to prove and easier to believe in.” Good cases deserve to persuade their audiences; they are also more likely to persuade their audiences. They are moreover crucial to building good relationships with an audience. Organizations that make good cases build credibility, for their objects live up to the cases made for them. Good cases, in short, build a concept; bad cases detract from it.

When are cases good? Call a case *reasonable* if and only if the reasons it presents would make it reasonable to accept the conclusion in the absence of further information. Good cases in advocacy are reasonable in just this sense. They are not bullet-proof. They do not prove that you ought to buy an object beyond any possible doubt. They do not usually provide statistical information. But they do provide information that would make it reasonable to adopt the conclusion. Good cases, in other words, make it reasonable for someone to shift perceptions, moving from their current perception to the desired perception.

To devise a method for constructing advocacy strategies, then, we need a method for constructing reasonable cases. Such cases typically depend on general principles. Some principles come from particular concepts; others are empirical generalizations. Some, however, hold in a wide variety of circumstances and for a wide variety of subject matters. They are not tied to particular concepts or generalizations. Instead, they seem to form part of the structure of thinking itself. We call these patterns of thought, or, simply, *patterns*.

When it comes to moving perceptions in perception space, patterns are high-octane accelerants. They are high-energy fuels, capable of generating large amounts of force at little expense. They are thus vital tools for advocates. If you want to change people’s perceptions, or get them to do something, patterns are the most efficient means you have.

Our model of advocacy includes *practical* patterns, patterns relating to *doing* something— purchasing an object, casting a vote, reaching a verdict, introducing a bill, and so on. Many affect the reason dimension of perception space. But we can also uncover patterns for emotional and source credibility factors.

Recall that when we discussed concepts, we identified four ways of differentiating an object from its competition: the material it is made of (which includes components of all kinds); the structure of the object (its form, design, style, format, etc.); the process by which it is made and the processes to which it contributes; and its engineering (which is a combination of the first three, and the interactions between them). The general blueprint for building cases is fairly straightforward:

1. Start with the four types of differentiating features: material, structure, process and engineering.
2. Identify the ends; the intrinsic goods that the object delivers.
3. Connect the differentiating features to the end by applying a pattern: whether a pattern of Reason, Emotion, or Source Credibility.

Object research and development supplies the differentiating features, the basic information about the object that serves as the advocate's starting point for building a case. Our theory then supplies a model for identifying the end, the intrinsically valuable good the object delivers, and provides a system of patterns for establishing a convincing connection between the object's other features and the end it delivers.

We will now introduce our model of intrinsic goods. As we introduce each good, we will illustrate the way features of an object can be persuasively connected to that end by applying a pattern. We will do this by providing a reconstruction, within the context of our model, of a message that successfully connects an object with an intrinsic good. These examples will demonstrate the power of our theory to provide a systematic method for generating persuasive cases. We begin with the patterns of Reason, and discuss patterns of Emotion and Source Credibility in subsequent sections.

Intrinsic Goods and Patterns of Reason

Health

The good of health is perhaps the most fundamental type of intrinsic good. Goods of this type—such as safety, security, energy, and vibrancy—are certainly desirable in themselves. But goods of health are also prerequisites for pursuing and achieving virtually all other goods. The absence of health, due to injury or illness, interferes with our ability to achieve our other ends.

There are many types of objects that are especially conducive to cases that connect an object with this good. We can connect health with the nourishing properties of foods and the energy-giving properties of drinks. And we can build cases based on the ability of a whole host of objects to protect, promote, or restore our health—objects as diverse as pharmaceuticals, diets aids, security systems, and exercise machines and programs.

In the 1990s, Ivory soap, famous for being “99 and 44/100% pure,” introduced its “A clean as real as Ivory” campaign. Our theory provides a systematic way to reconstruct the message of that slogan. It begins with a material difference. Ivory soap is made from only the purest ingredients. This feature of the object is connected with the intrinsic good of cleanliness, which is one dimension of health. The connection is made through *the pattern of efficient cause*:

If the cause of x has some good feature, that feature is likely to be transmitted to x .

Because Ivory soap is so pure, washing with Ivory soap achieves an equally pure clean. You will not just look clean or smell clean. You will really *be* clean—free from germs, free from the risk of getting sick. And that is the kind of clean that is important for health.

Pleasure

Pleasure is a frequently and universally sought intrinsic good. We desire what is thrilling, exciting, fun, enjoyable, and satisfying. We also want to be free from displeasure—from pain, sorrow, annoyance, frustration, and inconvenience.

The “Got Milk?” campaign is a great example of a *negative* case connecting an object with the good of pleasure. A negative case shows the audience that if they do not acquire the object, they will have to deal with an undesirable result (as opposed to *positive* cases, which show the object as a way to access some good.)

Let’s reconstruct the message of the well-known “Aaron Burr” ad that started that campaign. We begin again with a material difference: because of its rich creamy taste, which no other stuff on earth has, milk goes perfectly with peanut butter. The ad makes a negative case that establishes a connection between this feature of milk and the end of pleasure. It does this through the *pattern of privation*:

If x is good, the lack of x is bad.

The pleasure of eating peanut butter vanishes if it is not accompanied by the pleasure of drinking milk. The fact that you have run out of milk suffices to turn eating peanut butter into an unpleasant, frustrating, disappointing experience. So you had better not run out.

Attractiveness

Though the standards for them may vary, beauty, elegance, and other forms of aesthetic appeal are widely valued in and of themselves. Cases based on the good of attractiveness have two general forms. Sometimes, the case connects an object with the process of making someone or something else attractive. Cases for fashions and beauty objects often have this form. Other times, the case emphasizes the attractiveness of the object itself—the fact that it looks, feels, sounds, smells, or tastes good.

Cases of the second type almost always start from a structural difference—a feature of the object’s design or style. The Moen “Buy it for looks. Buy it for life” campaign connects the sleek design of a Moen faucet with the good of attractiveness, by way of the *pattern of part to whole*:

If some part of a whole has a feature, the whole has the feature.

A Moen faucet makes for a beautiful sink. A beautiful sink makes a kitchen more beautiful. A beautiful kitchen makes a home more beautiful. So buying a Moen faucet is a means to living your life in a more aesthetically appealing space.

Attractiveness is not always physical. Scientists find simple, mathematically elegant theories attractive. Readers find certain styles of writing attractive and others unattractive. Organizations, ideas, positions, policies, and personalities can be attractive or unattractive in ways independent of any physical features they or their advocates might have.

Achievement

We desire achievement for the rewards it brings. But we also value it intrinsically. Achievement, triumph, and victory are things we want for their own sakes. Some objects are instrumental means to achievement—they help us succeed. Others, like many luxury goods, are constitutive means of achievement. This may mean that acquiring them is itself part of success. Or it may mean that savoring them is part of the experience of enjoying an achievement

Nike’s legendary “Just do it” campaign is a paradigmatic example of the first type of case. Nike sneakers are set apart by various material, design, and engineering features. They are made from space-age materials; they are designed to be supportive yet aerodynamic; and these features combine for superlative performance. The message connects these features to the end of achievement through the *pattern of antecedence*:

If x is good, then what x follows from is good.

Athletic achievement is more likely to follow for those with the performance edge that comes from wearing Nikes. And it is the differentiating features of Nikes that provide that edge.

Relationships

Every psychologically healthy person desires to have relationships with other people—to experience the bonds of family, the pleasures of friendship, the joys of love and romance. A case can be built on the basis of this end by connecting an object with the stages and special occasions of the various types of relationships, or by showing how an object can help interpersonal interactions to proceed more smoothly.

One of the most successful campaigns in history is the DeBeers “A Diamond Is Forever” campaign. This is a message that changed the world. It was introduced at a time when diamonds were rarely used in engagement rings, and shifted cultural practices dramatically. Diamonds are now the engagement stone of choice. This message begins from a material difference of diamonds—their hardness—and connects a diamond ring to the end of a lasting relationship through the *pattern of similarity or analogy*:

x seems to be f as y seems to be g , and x is f ; so, y is g .

Diamonds are such hard stones that they seem indestructible. And just as it seems diamonds are indestructible, so it seems true love is never-ending. As a matter of fact, diamonds are the hardest substance on earth; they are practically indestructible. The real permanence of a diamond, then, inspires us to think that true love is just as permanent. And that makes a diamond ring the perfect symbol of a relationship that is meant to last.

Esteem

We not only want relationships with other people; we want those people to think well of us. An object that is conspicuously good, universally desired, an honor, or a sign of social status is a natural candidate for a case that connects that object with the intrinsic good of esteem. Porsche has run several campaigns that make this case, with slogans like “If you lose it in the parking lot, everyone can direct you to it.”

This message connects a Porsche with the good of esteem through the *pattern of whole to part*:

If the whole is good, its parts are good.

The distinctive engineering of a Porsche means you just cannot miss the fact that it is a Porsche. The individual car is part of the Porsche line, and the perceptions of that line as a whole constitute the Porsche concept. Those perceptions include a great deal of respect and esteem. That respect and esteem transfers from the whole line to the individual car, and from there to the person who owns it. Porsche owners connect themselves to the Porsche concept and so inherit its perceived qualities.

Physical objects are not the only things instrumental to the intrinsic good of esteem. Membership in the right club or church, a degree from the right university, a job at the right company or with a certain title, and certain habits of speech, dress, and behavior all indicate and generate esteem at least as effectively as material possessions.

Control

We value independence. We want to be in control of our own lives. How can an object be a means to control, independence, or even power? It can give you capacities you might not otherwise have. It can put you in control of decisions you might otherwise have to cede to others. It can express your individuality, enabling you to define yourself as you choose. And it may be tailored just for you. Tailored, custom-made clothing, for example, by being tailored precisely to fit one person, does not force you to fit yourself to predefined categories, but adapts the categories to you.

Apple's famous "1984" campaign focuses on the features of an Apple that allow the user to tailor its functions to his or her own needs. It connects these features to the end of control through the *pattern of use*:

If what x is used for is good, then x is good.

An Apple computer enables you to express your ideas, accomplish your tasks, and organize your life. These are all aspects of the end of control. They are good reasons to get an Apple.

Again, this applies at least as well to organizations, ideologies, and other nonphysical objects. Advocates for political ideologies argue about which positions and policies most effectively promote liberty and which kinds of control are legitimate or illegitimate.

Virtue

We care about being the kind of people we ought to be, or, at least, think we ought to be. This is what we mean when we say that virtue is among the intrinsically valuable goods. We build a case from the end of virtue when we connect an object with an honorable or noble purpose. Objects that are part of the "green revolution" are especially conducive to cases of this kind. But such appeals form a large part of cases for and against political ideologies and candidates, moral stances, organizations, and other nonphysical objects.

Take, for example, this message for 7th Generation dishwashing liquid: "Gentle on your hands, and the earth." 7th Generation objects are made without the harsh chemicals found in many

cleaners—this is their material difference. The message connects this feature to the end of preserving the environment through the pattern of antecedence, which we have already seen. What follows from using 7th Generation cleaners is a reduction in your negative impact on the environment. The distinguishing material features of the object make achieving this end possible.

Understanding

We want knowledge, not just because it helps us accomplish things, though of course it does, but also because we value it for its own sake. We can build a case for an object or service, therefore, on the value of understanding. Educational objects and programs, books, children’s toys and activities, etc. are especially conducive to cases of this type. So are theories, ideas, ideologies, and other intellectual objects.

The Discovery Channel’s recent “The world is just awesome” campaign is a good illustration of this kind of case. The Discovery Channel is distinguished by the depth and breadth of its content. The message connects this feature to the end of understanding through the *pattern of proportion*:

If having x is good, then what has more of x is better.

The Discovery Channel portrays itself as the place to go to learn about every scientific endeavor under the sun. The variety and amount of educational content they offer is highlighted as what sets them apart from other educational outlets.

Being Understood

In addition to the desire to understand, people also have a basic desire to be understood. Building a case on understanding the customer is a powerful and virtually all-purpose advocacy tool. “We understand you, and we know what you need. We know what, deep down, you really want. Here it is.” That is a potent message; delivered with the right combination of reasons and credibility, it can pack an emotional wallop.

During his 1992 presidential campaign, Bill Clinton famously told an unemployed man, “I feel your pain.” Clinton was pointing out a distinguishing feature of his personality: his capacity for empathy. His message uses a version of the pattern of antecedence to connect that feature with the good of being understood. The result of having an empathetic personality is that one is able to feel for oneself, and thus to understand, what others are feeling as they deal with their own problems and challenges.

Now, let’s use our system of intrinsic goods to identify some patterns of Emotion.

Patterns of Emotion

To catalogue patterns of emotion we need to consider how to classify emotions psychologically. We advocate a novel goods-based classification of emotion, based on intrinsic goods, giving emotional and rational appeals a similar structure.

Moralistic logicians (some might call them fundamentalists) would argue that cases based on emotion are irrational. Such a label has for years kept us from accepting the truth that reasons based purely on left-brain functions are often handicapped and that other types of reasons are in themselves neither good nor evil and can play legitimate roles in reasoning. As Blaise Pascal said,

“The heart has its reasons that Reason knows not of.” The moralistic logicians not only handicap advocates and their audiences, denying them vitally important persuasive tools, but miss the central point: that Reason and Emotion have parallel structures and change perceptions for the same reason, by virtue of their connection to intrinsic goods.

Emotional Appeals

Some politicians have made reputations, good or bad, for using emotional appeals to win support for their positions. Cases based not on rational considerations but on emotional appeals count in the logical tradition as *appeals to the people*. They rely on the reasonable default principle, the most general pattern of emotion:

Follow your emotions.

That is a fine principle. All other things being equal, you ought to follow your emotions. It is so general, however, that it offers no practical help. It simply says that emotional considerations have legitimate persuasive force. But to learn anything about *how* emotional considerations can persuade, we need to be able to classify emotions.

A case *appeals to force* if it bases its conclusion not on rational considerations but on fear. This too rests on sound patterns:

If something is in your interest, do it.
If something is likely to harm you, avoid it.

If you want to avoid something, and performing an action will bring it about, you have reason to avoid that action. We have evolved in such a way that fear is a good (though hardly infallible) indicator of dangers or, in general, things to avoid.

Many cases rest on a pattern:

If doing something would hurt others, do not do it.

An *appeal to pity* is a case relying on arousing feelings of sympathy or pity among the audience. An appeal to pity tries to arouse pity for someone and exploit it to persuade the listener to act for that person's benefit.

These appeals to emotion are more specific than a generic principle of following your feelings, but they still add up to much less than a model or theory of the use of emotion in persuasion. We use a vast language of emotion to describe many different states of mind; why single out fear, pity, and acceptance as the three emotions that might be used to move someone to a desired perception? Surely we just as often, and just as effectively, appeal to joy, frustration, pride, anxiety, embarrassment, greed, loneliness, and a hundred other emotions. If we are to provide a model of how emotion affects perception, then, we need far more.

We distinguish hundreds of emotions, which bear interesting relations to one another. Joy, for example, is more intense than enjoyment and opposed to despair. Rage is more powerful than annoyance and incompatible with tenderness. To understand how emotions can serve as reasons to change perceptions, we need classify emotions, seeing what general kinds they fall under and how they relate to each other.

Given their power in persuasion and their importance in human affairs in general, you might expect that psychologists would have a long-standing, well-confirmed categorization of emotions. But they do not. And no one has constructed a theory of how emotions persuade audiences that goes much beyond Aristotle's common sense observations in the *Rhetoric*.

We are proposing a novel way of mapping emotions that ties their structure directly to the role of emotions in persuasion. The central idea is simple: You do not react emotionally to something if you do not care about it.

You get emotional about things you value.

We should expect the organization of the realm of emotions to follow, at least roughly, the organization of intrinsic goods. For every intrinsic good, there are positive emotions typical of seeking, anticipating, achieving, and having achieved that good, as well as negative emotions typical of missing, longing for, failure to achieve, having failed to achieve, or fearing the loss of that good.

Though emotions form a dimension of perception space separate from that of reason, they are not completely unrelated to reason. Certain emotions typically accompany the quest for any given intrinsic good. Those emotions are most effective in moving perceptions that relate in some way to those goods. If we identify certain intrinsic goods as relevant to moving our audience from its current perception to the desired perception along the reason axis, then, we have also identified the emotions most likely to help us move them along the emotion axis. Conversely, if we can identify the emotions relevant to moving our audience, we have also identified the intrinsic goods to which to appeal in making our rational case.

Here is a rough sketch of how emotions correlate with intrinsic goods. In each case, we distinguish positive from negative emotions. There are many other distinctions to be drawn; most notably, between emotions pertaining to the past, present, and future, and between emotions of different intensities. This table includes more than a hundred emotions. Emotions are fine-grained, however; it is not difficult to add many more.

A Goods-Based Model of Emotions

Positive

Health

security, enthusiasm,
positiveness,
composure, calmness,
relaxation,
alertness, repose,
youthfulness, energy

Negative

fear, alarm, shock,
fright, horror, terror,
panic, hysteria, mortification,
anxiety, nervousness, angst,
tenseness, uneasiness,
apprehension, worry, distress,
dread, pain, suffering, hurt,
weariness, stress, exhaustion,
hysteria, fanaticism,
negativity, lethargy

Pleasure

joy, anticipation,
 amusement, bliss,
 cheerfulness, gaiety,
 glee, jolliness, joviality,
 delight, enjoyment,
 gladness, happiness,
 jubilation, elation,
 satisfaction, ecstasy,
 euphoria, contentment,
 enthrallment, rapture,
 relief, expectation,
 gratification, hope,
 zeal, zest, excitement,
 exhilaration, thrill,
Schaudenfreude

sadness, torment,
 anguish,
 depression, despair,
 hopelessness, gloom,
 glumness, sorrow, woe,
 unhappiness, grief,
 misery, melancholy,
 desperation

Attractiveness

arousal, desire, lust,
 passion, attraction
 infatuation, longing,
 appreciation, interest

disgust, revulsion, contempt,
 indifference,
 lack of interest, repulsion,
 loathing, reluctance, aversion

Achievement

pride, optimism, triumph,
 eagerness, gain,
 completion

pessimism, disappointment,
 dismay, displeasure, loss,
 incompleteness, indecision,
 refusal, apathy, boredom

Relationships

love, friendship, adoration,
 affection, fondness, liking,
 tenderness, compassion,
 sentimentality, caring,
 closeness, intimacy,
 togetherness, respect,
 attentiveness, trust

hate, dislike, anger,
 aggravation, irritation,
 agitation, annoyance,
 grouchiness, grumpiness,
 detachment, indifference,
 rage, outrage, fury,
 wrath, hostility, ferocity,
 bitterness, scorn, spite,
 vengefulness, dislike,
 resentment, cruelty, distance,
 disrespect, inattentiveness,
 avoidance, distrust, suspicion

Esteem

pride, self-esteem,
 innocence, modesty,
 self-satisfaction

remorse, regret, guilt, shame,
 embarrassment, humiliation,
 inadequacy, self-pity,
 insecurity, shyness

Control

power, mastery,
 courage,
 boldness,
 freedom, permission,
 independence, daring,
 resistance,
 suggestion, confidence

contempt,
 exasperation, frustration,
 rashness, timidity, cowardice, caution,
 obligation, prohibition,
 constraint,
 warning, defeat

Virtue

pity, sympathy, generosity,
 patience, tolerance,
 empathy, gratitude,
 kindness, acceptance,
 righteous indignation

envy, jealousy, greed,
 self-righteousness, pitilessness,
 impatience, intolerance,
 ingratitude, selfishness

Understanding

discovery, familiarity,
 curiosity, epiphany,
 surprise, amazement,
 astonishment, inspiration,
 wonder, mystery

confusion, befuddlement,
 puzzlement, doubt

Being Understood

acceptance,
 belonging, affirmation,
 recognition

alienation, isolation, neglect,
 loneliness, rejection,
 homesickness, insult

For every emotion, there is a pattern. Here are a few examples:

If something makes you feel secure, obtain it.
 If something brings you joy, do it.
 If you are likely to regret something, do not do it.

Understanding the structure of the emotions relates the reason and emotion axes by tying both reasons and emotions to goods. That allows us to find a set of emotions that relate both affectively and effectively to a given rational case. It also allows us to start with emotions and find the intrinsic goods most relevant to the shift in perception we are trying to accomplish. We want to present harmonic cases, cases that move perceptions in the desired direction on all three axes at once. That is much easier if we comprehend how the dimensions relate to one another.

Consider, for example, an object whose primary selling point is that it is fun. (Think, for instance, of a roller coaster.) The rational case for it relies on the intrinsic good of pleasure. The table above indicates the kinds of emotions relevant to making a harmonic case for the object. You might stress the future good, the anticipation of going on the ride; the present good, the enjoyment, excitement, and thrill of being on it; the “just past” good, the exhilaration, even euphoria, of just having been on the ride; or the past good, the fond recollection or even nostalgia for the ride once the season is over. You might stress the negative emotions, for example, the disappointment of someone who did not get to go. Of course, the object probably has connections to other intrinsic goods: in this case, control, relationships, and achievement.

So, you can build a case on the daring of riding, the pride of having done it, and the friendships resulting from the shared experience.

The table also allows us to “reverse engineer” cases, starting from emotions and working back to intrinsic goods. A case that naturally incorporates envy, for example, suggests a tie to the intrinsic good of selflessness. That in turn suggests the possibility of cases built around other emotions, such as self-righteousness, kindness, sympathy, gratitude, acceptance, and so on. A case that starts from the possibility of humiliation or embarrassment (e.g., “Ring around the collar!”) suggests a link to the intrinsic good of esteem, which further suggests the use of emotions such as insecurity, pride, and self-satisfaction.

Patterns of Source Credibility

Source credibility is one of the axes of perception. Its power is on a par with that of reason and emotion. Sometimes, cases are built on it. We often do things without understanding why simply because someone tells us to do them. Even more often, we believe things because people tell us they are true without giving us any other reasons. It is good that we do. Without the power of source credibility, we could not learn much of anything; we could not even learn our own language. (Imagine: Mom: “That is a kitty.” Baby (thinking): “Why on earth should I believe *her*?” Of course, the baby could not even get to the stage of thinking that thought!) But, typically, source credibility is not itself the foundation of a case being advocated. It is, however, an inevitable consideration in nearly every other kind of case. Negative source credibility, moreover, can undermine nearly any case. If you are told something reasonable and true by someone you despise, you will often mistakenly conclude purely on the basis of the source’s negative credibility that their statement is false or suspect.

Common Practice

Not all source credibility factors involve people directly. Many involve concepts, including megaconcepts such as nations, peoples, creeds, and denominations. Others involve the medium of communication itself as a credibility factor. Often, people are presenting the case, testifying, directly or indirectly, on behalf of the object. People are illustrating the object’s usefulness. And all of these types of endorsements are an important and traditional part of advocacy.

Some advocacy communications rely on the testimony, not of one person, but of a group of people representing the community in general. The general pattern for this case is

Many people favor this object. So, you should too.

This is known as an *appeal to common practice*. We learn a great deal from the common practice of members of communities; our knowledge of how to behave in various situations, how to interact with other people, and even how to use language depends on our learning and following the common practice of the community.

Messages that rely on common practice can thus be very powerful. That most people, faced with a decision like mine, choose a particular option is strong evidence in favor of that option. There is wisdom in crowds, at least in many circumstances. So, being an advocate for a popular opinion or a market leader itself makes a powerful case. Many people, faced with a similar choice, have chosen this object. Conclusion: It must be a reasonable choice.

Conversely, that many people belonging to a community alien to me choose a particular option may incline me strongly against that option. This is another example of negative source credibility. I reasonably consider the wisdom of *my* crowd. I often unreasonably dismiss the wisdom of other crowds. Thus is the conflict between nations, peoples, creeds, and denominations exacerbated.

Testimony

How do we evaluate testimony? Cases that incorporate testimony are called *appeals to authority*:

X is using this object (or says to use it). So, you should use it too.

We acquire most of our knowledge from other people. (How do you know that Kuala Lumpur is the capital of Malaysia? Odds are, you have read that it is, and believed what you read.) Everyone agrees that the strength of the argument depends on the credibility of the source of the message on the particular topic at hand. Is this person an authority on the subject? Should we believe him or her? How do we know? Several factors are relevant:

Authority. Does the source hold a position relevant to the subject? Does the source have a social status expected of people who would know about this subject?

Credibility. Does the source have relevant expertise? Is the source trustworthy? Is the source testifying in good faith?

Attractiveness. Is the source likable? Is the source attractive? Is the source very similar to us?

Aspiration. Does the source represent someone we would like to be like? Is it someone by whom we would like to be admired? Is it a source with whom we would seek association?

Some of these considerations are obviously relevant to assessing the strength of testimony. Suppose we want to know something about physics. Let's say, for example, we are trying to form an opinion about the recent hypothesis that the universe has the structure of an E8 Lie algebra. Asking a professor of physics or a professional physicist who works in industry seems entirely reasonable. Asking the first person we encounter on the street or the clerk at the bank seems unreasonable. So, holding a relevant position matters.

Of course, holding a certain position is not everything. The professor may not be keeping up, and the bank clerk may have been studying physics in her spare time. So, we need to be able to evaluate expertise independently of its usual social indicators.

We also need to judge the situation and the motivations of the person giving testimony. Can we trust the physicist? Can we trust the bank clerk? Is either trying to pull the wool over our eyes for some reason?

It is much harder to see why considerations of attractiveness and association are relevant. Why should we care what the bank clerk or the professor of physics looks like? Why should we care about how nice they are? Certainly we find more attractive people more credible than unattractive people. Advocates put attractive people in communications not only for general association effects but because people listen to a greater extent to what they say.

This might seem to be a completely irrational factor. Indeed, the entire phenomenon of celebrity endorsements might seem irrational. As we argue in the next section, however, this is actually a clue to the essence of what makes people credible.

A More Desirable Version of Me

In making decisions, we try to choose the option that best promotes our goal. But our decisions are not only relevant to the specific goals that lie immediately before us at the times when we make those decisions. They are also relevant to our general, long-term goal of *being the kind of person we want to be*.

We recognize that we do not always choose the best option. Sometimes, we do not know which option is best. Sometimes, we do know but give in to temptation and choose a worse option anyway. Sometimes we choose on the basis of values, desires, and preferences that we do not know we have. Sometimes we choose on the basis of values, desires, and preferences that we know we have but wish we did not have. Even our current values may not ultimately cohere with our ideals and aspirations. In short, we do not always ultimately endorse the values we hold and the decisions we make on the basis of them.

There are thus a variety of reasons why we might not trust our own desires and decisions and why we might not be happy with the results:

- Maybe we lack information.
- Maybe we have bad information.
- Maybe we are confused.
- Maybe we are weak of will.
- Maybe we have questionable taste.
- Maybe we have values we will later reject.
- Maybe we have desires we do not want to have.
- Maybe we have desires that are selfish or self-destructive.
- Maybe we have desires driving us of which we are completely unaware.

We try to decide on the basis, not just of what we want, but of what a more desirable version of us would want. That is to say, we ask whether, on reflection, we would still want this if we knew more about it; if we were thinking clearly; if we had the right values; if we were not prone to temptation; and if we had better taste. In short, we ask whether a better version of ourselves would want this.

Part of raising this question is asking whether doing what we are considering doing fits with our ideals and aspirations. To answer that question, we need to know what they are. Surely, we aspire to live well. We aspire to the good life, as we understand it. But the good life is just what we outlined in thinking about intrinsic goods. Like anyone else, we want health, pleasure, achievement, esteem, love, friendship, control, beauty, knowledge, and virtue. In valuing these things, we are all alike. But we do not value them to the same degree. One person may stress human relationships, while another stresses achievement. We differ in the weights we assign to various intrinsic goods. Our ideals and aspirations, then, involve intrinsic goods, but also involve a conception and weighting of each.

Now we are in a position to explain what effective communicators and credible testifiers are. Whom do I find most credible? *Someone I perceive as a more desirable version of me*. If

someone who approximates the person I would like to be endorses an object, I have reason to believe that I would value it as well. Such a person is like me, but, by my own standards, improved—more knowledgeable, more successful, more accomplished, more popular, better looking, or more virtuous. To be credible for me, that person must reflect some elements of my ideals and aspirations. They must share my vision of the good life in some respects, and be closer to achieving it than I am. This is why people who are attractive have more credibility than those who are less attractive. Their greater attractiveness is a sign of their being closer to the good life and thus representing a more desirable version of a greater number of people.

Endorsers does not have to be ideal in all or even many respects. They just have to be improved versions of ourselves in the relevant respects. *Our goods-based model of reasons yields a goods-based model of credibility.* We can use our categorization of intrinsic goods to specify ways in which someone may be effective in testifying on behalf of an object.

Authority

- Esteem (honor, respect, social status)
- Power (control, independence, autonomy)
- Understanding (knowledge, comprehension, mastery)

Credibility

- Achievement (accomplishment, success)
- Virtue (social responsibility, self-actualization)
- Being Understood (understanding of and empathy with the audience)

Social attractiveness

- Health (security, vibrancy, energy)
- Pleasure (fun, enjoyment, contentment)
- Relationships (friendship, romance, love)
- Attractiveness (beauty, aesthetics)

An endorsement may be effective, in other words, if it exploits a connection to an intrinsic good. The endorser may be someone held in high esteem, occupying a high social position of honor, respect, and power. It may be someone of considerable achievement or virtue who has succeeded in impressive and visible ways. Or it may be someone who is unusually contented, who enjoys a fun-filled life, or who is unusually friendly or attractive. Any of these characteristics makes someone an effective endorser of an object, even if that object has no particular relation to that dimension of the good life. The endorsement is especially effective if there is such a connection, however. Integrating rational, emotional, and source credibility aspects of a case makes for a cohesive, harmonic case with great persuasive power. So, an endorsement will have greatest effectiveness when the audience perceives the endorser as someone much like them, but improved in the respects that pertain to the intrinsic goods relevant to the object.

Appeals to authority have power for another reason as well. A celebrity who endorses an object irrelevant to his or her field of achievement has credibility, not because of specific expertise, but because of an appreciation for excellence. If Dr. J endorses a line of basketball shoes, he speaks within his area of expertise, and his credibility is easy to explain. He excels at achieving the good most relevant to the object. If he endorses a soft drink (Dr. Pepper), he speaks outside his area of expertise; he excels at achieving a good that appears irrelevant to the object. But he still enjoys some credibility. Why?

He knows what is good. His achievements indicate that he understands excellence. That understanding can apply outside his specific area of expertise. And it applies whether we see him as expressing, in general, our ideals and aspirations or not, for he shares with us one ideal, at least—a preference for what is good.

Conclusion

We have been outlining a theory of advocacy and the environment in which perceptions exist. It rests on a model of perception space and on practical patterns, basic principles on which advocacy depends. Many aspects of it are new: our model of perception space and our goods-based models of reasons, emotions, and credibility. But we have built it on bedrock, the theory of persuasion that was developed, elaborated, examined, and thoroughly tested for most of the history of Western civilization. For that reason, we are confident of its completeness. It forms the basis for developing effective advocacy strategies and for assembling messages into effective cases.

As we argued at the beginning of this paper, the lack of a common model of persuasion wastes resources, reduces effectiveness, and produces frustration for individuals, institutions, governments, and corporations engaged in any communications endeavor. Using this model of advocacy in perception space will allow all of us—politicians and peers, communities and corporations, marketers and mothers, lawmakers and lovers—to construct more effective communications, and to do so more efficiently. All it takes is a strong model based on our own civilization's foundational thinking, a comprehensible set of blueprints, and the effort required for us as experts in communication and reasoning to elevate our craft to a higher level.