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Some people are naturally charming and persuasive. Others are clearly not, though they may try to motivate you with their logic, reason and sound arguments. Unfortunately for them, humans are not logical creatures and they are rarely rational. We generally form our choices based on emotions, then use "facts" to justify our decisions, as anyone who's had any sales training can tell you or any nerdy guy who lost a pretty girl to a bad boy (or vice versa) knows all too well.

In business, if you can't get your point across or convince others of the value of your ideas, you're finished before you begin.

But there's hope. Apparently those of us who lack the innate charm and magnetism to routinely perform Jedi mind tricks with the truth can learn how to break free to connect and influence others despite our rational and logical viewpoint. (Maybe.)

Here are two new books that fearlessly attempt to convey the tricks and truths of persuasion to the charisma-free among us who remain mired in the reality-based world.

27 Powers of Persuasion: Simple Strategies to Win Allies and Seduce Audiences. Chris **St. Hilaire**. Prentice Hall Press. 240 pages.

Hilaire works as a consultant to attorneys seeking to frame their arguments in ways that juries will accept and acquit (or convict) despite the law. Well, that's unfair, of course, but his previous experience as a political consultant also gave him a great foundation to build upon.

Legal cases are rarely cut and dried, so he must find ways to frame arguments so that his clients' clients are seen in a less harsh light, so aspersions are cast upon their adversaries. It's manipulation, to be sure, but he seems to have encountered few moral quandaries -- or successfully avoided irksome moral ambiguities -- as he went about this business.

Regardless, **St. Hilaire** provides a number of interesting and useful methods for presenting ideas and providing contexts for arguments and issues.

He's practical and conveys mild amusement throughout for the processes involved, though he very wisely recognizes how humans think and act and does a really fine job of conveying his insights.

His anecdotes are apt and instructional too, and show how executives and others can present their thoughts in ways that are palatable to others without necessarily compromising or losing integrity (much).

I especially liked his account of how Mazda's ad agency persuaded the car company's incumbent and intractable management team to change gears in its approach to advertising, using a combination of information, emotion and smart strategy. "Zoom zoom, " indeed.

Convince Them in 90 Seconds or Less: Make Instant Connections That Pay Off in Business and in Life. Nicholas Boothman. Workman Publishing. 295 pages.

Boothman is a devotee of Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a somewhat controversial approach to communication and psychology.

Though he may apply its principles herein, for the most part his ideas seem more like common-sense tips on the mechanics of human interaction, like looking people in the eyes, smiling, asking questions to elicit their interest...things like that.

There is nothing particularly radical or revolutionary about any of this stuff, and Boothman is an upbeat and lucid writer, so it's a pleasant and easy read.

Whether it will transform you into a latter-day Svengali is an open question, but one can do far worse than follow his ideas and personal experiences as presented in this entertaining little book.

To receive business book reviews by e-mail or join the Business Monday Book Club, e-mail Richard Pachter at rap@richardpachter.com. To read more of Pachter's musings, go to <http://www.richardpachter.com> and follow him on Twitter @rpachter.