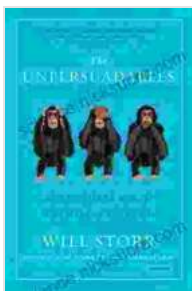


The Unpersuadables: Adventures With the Enemies of Science

In the age of the internet, it has become increasingly difficult to have a rational conversation about science. This is due in part to the rise of "unpersuadables" - people who are not open to changing their minds about scientific facts, no matter how much evidence is presented to them.



The Unpersuadables: Adventures with the Enemies of Science by Will Storr

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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Unpersuadability is a complex phenomenon that can be caused by a variety of factors, including:

- **Confirmation bias:** The tendency to seek out information that confirms one's existing beliefs and to ignore or discount information that contradicts those beliefs.
- **Cognitive dissonance:** The discomfort that arises when one holds two conflicting beliefs. This discomfort can motivate people to reject

new information that threatens their existing beliefs.

- **Groupthink:** The tendency to conform to the beliefs of one's group, even if those beliefs are not supported by evidence.
- **Conspiracy theories:** Beliefs that events are the result of secret plots by powerful groups. Conspiracy theories can provide a simple explanation for complex events, which can be appealing to people who are looking for certainty in an uncertain world.
- **Anti-intellectualism:** The distrust of intellectuals and expertise. Anti-intellectualism can lead people to reject scientific facts that they do not understand or that challenge their worldview.

Unpersuadability is a serious problem because it can lead to people making decisions that are not in their best interests. For example, people who deny the reality of climate change may be more likely to engage in behaviors that contribute to the problem, such as driving gas-guzzling cars or burning fossil fuels. People who are hesitant about vaccines may be more likely to contract preventable diseases. And people who believe in conspiracy theories may be more likely to support policies that are based on falsehoods.

There is no easy way to convince an unpersuadable person to change their mind. However, there are some things that you can do to increase the chances of success:

- **Be respectful:** It is important to remember that unpersuadable people are not stupid or ignorant. They simply have different beliefs than you do. Treat them with respect, even if you disagree with them.

- **Be patient:** It may take time to change someone's mind. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results immediately.
- **Be honest:** Don't try to deceive or manipulate unpersuadable people. Be honest about your beliefs and the evidence that you have to support them.
- **Be open-minded:** Be willing to listen to what unpersuadable people have to say. You may learn something new, and you may be able to find common ground with them.
- **Be persistent:** Don't give up on unpersuadable people. Keep talking to them and sharing information with them. Eventually, you may be able to change their mind.

It is important to remember that unpersuadability is not a hopeless condition. With patience, respect, and open-mindedness, it is possible to change someone's mind. Even if you don't succeed, you can still make a difference by helping to spread the truth about science and by challenging the misinformation that is so prevalent in our society.

Case Studies

The following case studies provide a closer look at the motivations, beliefs, and tactics of unpersuadable people:

The Climate Change Denier

John is a 50-year-old man who works in the oil industry. He is a strong believer in the free market and he thinks that government regulation is always bad. He also believes that climate change is a hoax perpetrated by scientists and environmentalists to control the economy.

John is not open to changing his mind about climate change. He has read all the evidence, and he still believes that it is a hoax. He is also not interested in hearing about the negative consequences of climate change. He believes that the free market will solve any problems that arise.

The Vaccine Hesitant Parent

Mary is a 35-year-old mother of two young children. She is a stay-at-home mom who is very involved in her children's lives. She is also very concerned about their health.

Mary is hesitant about vaccinating her children. She has read about the potential side effects of vaccines, and she is worried that they could harm her children. She also believes that vaccines are not necessary because she has never met anyone who has gotten sick from a vaccine-preventable disease.

Mary is open to hearing more about vaccines, but she is not sure if she will ever be convinced to vaccinate her children. She is very protective of her children, and she wants to make sure that they are safe.

The Conspiracy Theorist

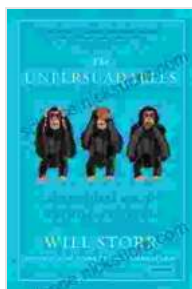
Bob is a 60-year-old man who is retired. He is a voracious reader and he is always looking for new information. He is also very interested in conspiracy theories.

Bob believes that the government is hiding the truth about many things, including the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the moon landing, and the 9/11 attacks. He also believes that there is a secret cabal of elites who are controlling the world.

Bob is not open to changing his mind about his conspiracy theories. He has done his own research, and he is convinced that he knows the truth. He is also not interested in hearing about any evidence that contradicts his beliefs.

The unpersuadables are a diverse group of people with a variety of motivations, beliefs, and tactics. However, they all share one common trait: they are not open to changing their minds about scientific facts. This can be a serious problem because it can lead to people making decisions that are not in their best interests.

If you encounter an unpersuadable person, it is important to be respectful, patient, and honest. You may not be able to change their mind, but you can still make a difference by helping to spread the truth about science and by challenging the misinformation that is so prevalent in our society.



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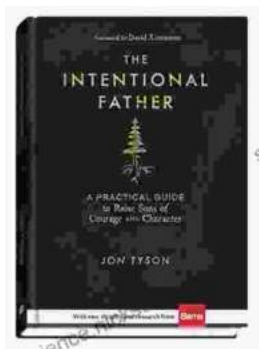
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