Pitch Anything

An Innovative Method for Presenting, Persuading, and Winning the Deal
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Chapter 1
The Method

The three basic parts of the brain are shown in Figure 1.1.

First, the history. Recent breakthroughs in neuroscience show that our brain developed in three separate stages. First came the old brain, or “crocodile brain” – we’ll call it the “croc brain” for short.

It’s responsible for the initial filtering of all incoming messages, it generates most survival fight-or-flight responses, and it produces strong, basic emotions, too.

But when it comes to decision making, the croc brain’s reasoning power is...well, primitive. It simply doesn’t have a lot of capacity, and most of what it does have is devoted primarily to the things it takes to keep us alive. When I am referring to the croc brain, I am referring to this level.

The midbrain, which came next, determines the meaning of things and social situations. And finally, the neocortex evolved with a problem-solving ability and is able to think about complex issues and produce answers using reason.

Figure 1.1 Three parts of the brain.
Messages that are composed and sent by your young neocortex are received and processed by the other person’s old crocodile brain.

With a computer, if I send you an Excel spreadsheet file, you open it and read it in Excel. This is how I thought the brain worked. If I created a message in my smart neocortex and “sent” it over to you (by telling you about it), I figured that you’d be opening that message in your neocortex.

But no pitch or message is going to get to the logic center of the other person’s brain without passing through the survival filters of the crocodile brain system first.

So instead of communicating with people, my best ideas were bouncing off their croc brains and crashing back into my face in the form of objections, disruptive behaviors, and lack of interest.

Ultimately, if they are successful, your pitches do work their way up to their neocortex eventually. And certainly by the time the other person is ready to say “Yes, we have a deal,” he is dealing with the information at the highest logic center of his brain. But that is not where the other person initially hears what you have to say.

1. If it’s not dangerous, ignore it.
2. If it’s not new and exciting, ignore it.
3. If it is new, summarize it as quickly as possible – and forget about the details. And finally there is this specific instruction:
4. Do not send anything up to the neocortex for problem solving unless you have a situation that is really unexpected an out of the ordinary.

These are the basic operating policies and procedures of our brains. No wonder pitching is so difficult.

First, given the limited focus and capacity of the croc brain, up to 90 percent of your message is discarded before it’s passed on up to the midbrain and then on to the neocortex. The crocodile brain just doesn’t process details well, and it only passes along big, obvious chunks of concrete data.

Second, unless your message is presented in such a way that the crocodile brain views it to be new and exciting – it is going to be ignored.

Third, if your pitch is complicated – if it contains abstract language and lacks visual cues – then it is perceived as a threat. Not a threat in the sense that the person listening to your pitch fears he is going to be attacked, but a threat because without cues and context, the croc brain concludes that your pitch has the potential to absorb massive amounts of brain power to comprehend.

And that is a major threat because there just isn’t enough brain power to handle survival needs, the problems of day-to-day life, and existing work problems plus
whatever unclear thing you are asking it to do. Presented with this kind of situation, a circuit breaker in your brain is tripped.

The result? A neurotoxin gets attached to the potentially threatening message (your pitch). This is like a FedEx tracking number, which, in turn, routes your message to the amygdala for processing – and destruction.

Pitches are sent from the modern – and smart – part of the brain: the neocortex. But they are received by a part of the brain that is 5 million years older (and not as bright.) This is a serious problem if you are trying to pitch anything.

- Boring: Ignore it.
- Dangerous: Fight/run
- Complicated: Radically summarize (Invariably causing a lot to be lost in the process) and pass it in severely truncated form.

**Rules of Engagement**

There are the two questions we always ask ourselves after we have made a presentation or pitch:

1. Did I get through?
2. Was my message well received?

Only way our pitch stands any chance whatsoever because the crocodile brain wants information a certain way – simple, clear, nonthreatening, and above all, intriguing and novel. You need to communicate in these ways, or you are never going to capture people’s attention.

- Going to ignore you if possible.
- Only focused on the big picture (and needs high-contrast and well-differentiated options to choose between).
- Emotional, in the sense it will respond emotionally to what it sees and hears, but most of the time that emotional response is fear.
- Focused on the here and now with a short attention span that craves novelty.
- In need of concrete facts – it looks for verified evidence and doesn’t like abstract concepts.

When I learned these rules of engagement for dealing with the crocodile brain, I had my big “Aha” moment.

I understood two very important things: First, I finally got the fundamental problem you and I have when we pitch something: We have our highly evolved neocortex, which is full of details and abstract concepts, trying to persuade the crocodile brain, which is afraid of almost everything and needs very simple, clear, direct, and nonthreatening ideas to decide in our favor.
Second, I realized that when my pitches had gone well, I had inadvertently adhered to the five rules of engagement contained in the bullet points above. I had made the crocodile brain feel safe; I was feeding it short vignettes of clear, visual, and novel information; and I wasn’t making it do much work. (I also understood that when I didn’t stick to those rules of engagement, I usually failed.)

**What Comes Next**

As you will see, it begins by *setting the frame* for your pitch, putting your big idea into an easily understood context. And then, once the frame is established, you must *seize high social status* so that you have a solid platform from which to pitch. Then you must create messages that are full of intrigue and novelty.

To make this process easier to remember, I use the acronym STRONG:

- Set the frame
- Tell the story
- Reveal the intrigue
- Offer the prize
- Nail the hookpoint
- Get the deal

### Chapter 2
**Frame Control**

**Frame-Based Business**

Sales techniques were created for people who have already lost the frame collision and are struggling to do business from a sub-ordinated or low-status position.

The sad fact is, these methods are typically ineffective and usually end up offending people instead of promoting pleasant, mutually beneficial business.

When you fail to control the *social frame*, you probably have already lost.

Frame-based business promotes the use of social dynamics, stacking things in your favor before the game even begins.

When you own the frame, you are positioned to reach an agreement with your buyer. And you are also in a position to decide which deals, orders, or projects you want to work on instead of taking what you can get.
Own the Frame, Win the Game

1. Everyone uses frames whether they realize it or not.
2. Every social encounter brings different frames together.
3. Frames do not coexist in the same time and place for long. They crash into each other, and one or the other gains control.
4. Only one frame survives. The others break and are absorbed. Stronger frames always absorb weaker frames.
5. The winning frame governs the social interaction. It is said to have frame control.

Choosing a Frame

Whenever you are entering a business situation, the first question you must ask is, “What kind of frame and I up against?” The answer will depend on several factors, including the relative importance of your offering to the business interests of your buyer.

But know this: Frames mainly involve basic desires. These are the domain of the croc brain. It would be fair to say that strong frames activate basic desires.

Going into most business situations, there are three major types of opposing frames that you will encounter:

1. Power frame
2. Time frame
3. Analyst frame

You have three major response frame types that you can use to meet these oncoming frames, win the initial collision, and control the agenda:

1. Power-busting frame
2. Time constraining frame
3. Intrigue frame
   There is a fourth frame you can deploy. It’s useful against all three of the opposing frames and many others you will encounter:
4. Prize frame

The Power Frame

The most common opposing frame you will encounter in a business setting is the power frame. The power frame comes from the individual who has a massive ego. His power is rooted in his status – a status derived from the fact that others give this person honor and respect.
You will know that you are facing a power frame when you encounter arrogance, lack of interest (a vibe that conveys “I’m more important than you”), rudeness, and similar imperial behaviors.

They are also the most vulnerable to your power-busting frame because they do not expect it.

When you approach an opposing power frame, your first and most important objective is to avoid falling into the other person’s frame by reacting to it.

Observing power rituals in business situations – such as acting deferential, engaging in meaningless small talk, or letting yourself be told what to do – reinforces the alpha status of your target and confirms your subordinate position. Do no do this!

As the opposing power frame approaches, when you first encounter the person you are meeting, you must be prepared for the frame collision to happen at any moment.

Prepare well and your frame will disrupt his, causing a momentary equilibrium in the social forces in the room, and then your frame will overtake and absorb his.

To instigate a power frame collision, use a mildly shocking but not unfriendly act to cause it. Use defiance and light humor. This captures attention and elevates your status by creating something called “local star power.” (You will read about status and local star power in Chapter 3.)

Taking the Frame

1. Perpetrate a small denial, or
2. Act out some type of defiance

Examples

You place a folder on the conference table that is labeled “Confidential – John Smith.” When the target reaches for the file, you grab it and say, “Uh-uh, not yet. You have to wait for this.”

If you deal in creative work and you brought visuals, let the target sneak a peek and then, when you see him curiously looking, turn it over, take it away, and deliver a soft reprimand that says, not until I say you’re ready.

This is a quick tease followed by a strong denial, and it is massively disruptive to the target’s croc brain. What you are doing is not offensive, and it’s not mean. It’s playful, and it tells the target subconsciously, “I’m the one in charge here, not you, my friend.”
TARGET: “Thanks for coming over. I only have 15 minutes this afternoon.”
YOU: “That’s ok, I only have 12.” You smile. But you are serious, too.

Keep it fun, do it with a grin on your face, and the moment the power shifts to you, move the meeting forward in the direction you want.

*When you are defiant and funny at the same time, he is pleasantly challenged by you and instinctively knows that he is in the presence of a pro.*

**The Prize Frame**

Another common situation occurs when the key decision maker does not attend the meeting as was agreed to. This situation requires a special kind of response that not only will reaffirm your control of the frame but also will establish you as someone unlike anyone else they have dealt with.

Let’s say that you’ve done everything right so far. You’ve come into the business interaction and quickly asserted strong frames and, hopefully, frame control with the people you’ve just met.

You’re ready to start your pitch and are waiting for “Mr. Big” to come in, when his assistant steps in to announce, “I am so sorry. Mr. Big just called. He can’t make the meeting for another hour. He says to start without him.”

You have just lost the frame, and there is nothing you can do about it. However, this does not mean that you do not have choices. Your options are:

1. Go ahead with your presentation, even though you know you’ve lost the frame, hope for the best, and hope that maybe Mr. Big will join the group toward the end of the meeting. I would not recommend this.
2. *Stop everything.* Reframe using power, time, or prize frames (which are covered in this chapter) or perhaps all three. Immediately take the power back.

This is what I usually say in this situation: “So you guys are asking me to delay the start? Okay. I can give you 15 minutes to get organized. But if we can’t start by then, then let’s just call it a day.

“I can wait 15 minutes, but then I have to leave.” That’s enough to get the message through.

When you own the frame, others react to you.

And if he does not show at that point, you leave. You do not deliver your presentation, you do not leave brochures, and you do not apologize. *Your* time has been wasted, and you don’t even need to say it. They know.
If it seems appropriate, and if this is a company with which you want to do business, tell the most important person in the room that you are willing to reschedule – on your turf. That’s right, you offer to reschedule and acknowledge that these things happen (we have all missed meetings before), but for the next meeting, they must come to you.

What prizing subconsciously says to your audience is, “You are trying to win my attention. I am the prize, not you. I can find a thousand buyers (audiences, investors, or clients) like you. There is only one me.”

It also conveys to your audience that if they wish to get any further information from you, they will first have to do something to earn it.

**Prizing 101**

To solidify the prize frame, you make the buyer qualify himself to you. “Can you tell me more about yourself? I’m picky about who I work with.” At a primal, croc brain level, you have just issued a challenge: *Why do I want to do business with you?*

> *When you rotate the circle of social power 180 degrees, it changes everything.*

**The Time Frame**

Frames involving *time* tend to occur later in the social exchange, after someone has already established frame control. Again, if you want to know who has the frame, it’s easy to observe. *When you are reacting to the other person, that person owns the frame. When the other person is reacting to what you do and say, you own the frame.*

Time frames are often used by your Target to rechallenge your frame by disrupting you and, in the moment of confusion, unwittingly take back control. As long as you are alert, time frames are easy to defeat.

You will know that a time-frame collision is about to occur when you see attention begin to wane. You’ve been pitching for a few minutes, and the temperature in the room in noticeably cooler.

The game you initiated was fun at the beginning, and now the audience has cooled and might be a little bored. There are limits to the human attention span, which is why a pitch must be brief, concise, and interesting.

When you see attention begin to bottom out and expire, that’s it. You’re done. Stay in control of time, and start wrapping up. *Running long or beyond the point of attention shows weakness, neediness, and desperation.*

When attention is lacking, set your own time constraint, and bounce out of there:
“Hey, looks like time’s up. I’ve got to wrap this up and get to my next meeting.” If they are interested in you, they will agree to a follow-up.

The mistake people make when they see their audience becoming fatigued is to talk faster, to try to force their way through the rest of the pitch. *Instead of imparting more valuable information faster, however, they only succeed in helping the audience retain less of their message.*

CUSTOMER: “Hi, yes, um, well, I only have about 10 minutes to meet with you, but come on in.”
SALES PERSON: “I really appreciate your time. Thanks for fitting me into your busy schedule.”

YOU: “No. I don’t work like that. There’s no sense in rescheduling unless we like each other and trust each other. I need to know, are you good to work with, can you keep appointments, and stick to a schedule?”
YOUR TARGET: “Okay, you’re right about that. Yeah, sure I can. Let’s do this now. I have 30 minutes. That’s no problem. Come on in.”

You have just broken your target’s time frame, established that your time is important, and he is now giving you focused attention instead of treating your visit like an annoyance.

**The Intrigue Frame**

How many times have you been giving a presentation when suddenly one or more people in the room take a deep dive into technical details? That’s the *analyst frame* coming at you. This is especially common in industries that involve engineers and financial analysts. This frame will kill your pitch.

The moment your audience does a “deep drill-down” into the minute details, you are losing control. The cognitive temperature of the audience, which was hot when things got started, naturally will cool as audience members listen to your pitch. But once you give their neocortex(es) something to calculate, they will go cold.

*Problem solving, numerical calculations, statistics, and any sort of geometry are called cold cognitions.* Nothing will freeze your pitch faster than allowing your audience to grind numbers or study details during the pitch.

It is important to realize that *human beings are unable to have hot cognitions and cold cognitions simultaneously.* The brain is not wired that way. *Hot cognitions* are feelings like wanting or desire or excitement, and *cold cognitions* come from “cold” processes like analysis and problem solving.

To maintain frame control and momentum, you must force your audience to be analytical on its own time. You do this by separating the technical and detailed material from your presentation.
So what should you do if someone demands details? You respond with summary data that you have prepared for this specific purpose.

You answer the question directly and with the highest-level information possible. Then you redirect their attention back to your pitch.

In financial deals, I respond with something like this:

“The revenue is $80 million, expenses are $62 million, the net is $18 million. These and other facts you can verify later, but right now, what we need to focus on is this: Are we a good fit? Should we be doing business together? This is what I came here to work on.”

If you're pitching a product and the drill-down is on price, don't chase this conversation thread. Do answer fast, answer directly with high-level details only, and go straight back to the relationship question.

What this tells the audience is that (1) I'm trying to decide if you are right for me; (2) if I decide to work with you, the numbers will back up what I'm telling you, so let's not worry about that now; and (3) I care about who I work with.

Keep the target focused on the business relationship at all times. Analysis comes later. This is the best and most reliable way to deal with a target who suddenly becomes bored and tries to entertain himself with the details of your deal.

*Remember, when you own the frame, you control the agenda, and you determine the rules under which the game is played.*

When it no longer seems that communication is flowing back and forth, the other person is in something called a *nonreactive state*. It's like the other person's mind is wandering or thinking about something else. This is a state of disinterest that you can correct for if you recognize it in time and act quickly.

You can tell that this is starting to happen when you notice remarks or body language that indicate that your presentation is not intriguing.

*Most intelligent people take great pleasure in being confronted with something new, novel, and intriguing.* Being able to figure it out is a form of entertainment like solving the Sunday puzzle.

When the target agreed to the meeting with you, what he or she really was saying was, “This is a puzzle I am interested in solving.”

*No one takes a meeting to hear about something that already know and understand.*

“I have a solution to one of your problems. I know something that you don't.” This is why people agree to take meetings and to hear a pitch.
It’s a rare moment, but not for the reason you may think. Audience members are, with full concentration and at the most basic and primal level, trying to figure out the answer to this question: “How similar is your idea to something I already know about or to a problem I have already solved?”

If audience members discover that the answer is close to what they had earlier guessed, they will mentally check out on you. They will experience a quick ping of self-satisfaction at the moment of realization, just before they mentally check out.

Checking out, in this context, refers to something very specific: an extreme and nearly total loss of alertness, and this is exactly what you need to avoid.

This is why you see presenters lose more and more of the audience as time goes on – those who solve the puzzle drop out.

As I’ve said before, the brain is a cognitive miser. Unless it can get value for itself, it stops paying attention.

The most effective way to overcome the analyst frame is with an intrigue frame.

Narrative and analytical information does not coexist. The human brain is unable to be coldly analytical and warmly engaged in a narrative at the same time. This is the secret power of the intrigue frame.

When your target drills down into technical material, you break that frame by telling a brief but relevant story that involves you. This is not a story that you make up on the spot; this is a personal story that you have prepared in advance and that you take to every meeting you have.

Since all croc brains are pretty similar, you will not need more than one story because the intrigue it will contain will have the same impact on every audience.

You need to be at the center of the story, which immediately redirects attention back to you. People will pause, look up, and listen because you are sharing something personal.

You break the analyst frame by capturing audience attention with a provocative story of something that happened to you, and then you keep their attention by not telling them how it ends until you are ready.
The Intrigue Story

Your intrigue story needs the following elements:

1. It must be brief, and the subject must be relevant to your pitch.
2. You need to be at the center of the story.
3. There should be risk, danger, and uncertainty.
4. There should be time pressure – a clock is ticking somewhere, and there are ominous consequences if action is not taken quickly.
5. There should be tension – you are trying to do something but are being blocked by some force.
6. There should be serious consequences – failure will not be pretty.

What's new and important is when to use it – as soon as you recognize that the target is coming at you with an analyst frame.

“This reminds me of the Porterville incident.....”

With this approach, the opposing analyst frame gets crushed by emotional, engaging, and relevant narratives like this. Attention redirects back to me, allowing me to finish my itch on my agenda, my timeline, and my topics.

After I finish the pitch, I complete the narrative arc by explaining the whole story.

Perhaps, in a broader sense, this is why we tell each other intriguing narratives – to participate in powerful emotional experiences involving high-stakes situations that we hope we will never have to face ourselves.

Stop the Analyst Frame Cold

The key to using an intrigue frame is to trust in its power to stop the analyst frame cold. The analyst frame filters your deal like this:

1. It focuses on hard facts only.
2. It says that aesthetic or creative features have no value.
3. It requires that everything must be supported by a number or statistic.
4. It holds that ideas and human relationships have no value.

Do not let you audience go there – keep audience members focused on the relationship they are building with you.

Breaking the frame with suspense.
The Prizing Frame: Reloaded

*Prizing is a way to deal with threatening and fast-approaching frames that are likely to push you into a low-status position.* When you prize, you frame yourself as high value in the eyes of your target. Prize correctly, and your target will be chasing you.

Establishing a prize frame is the very first thing you need to do when you are on someone else’s turf, ready to begin your pitch. When you get to the end of your pitch and it’s time to get a deal, your success depends on how well you establish your frames at the beginning and how strong those frames actually are.

Whenever we chase someone or value someone else more than ourselves, we assume the subordinate position and put ourselves at a disadvantage.

Who is the prize, or who is chasing whom, is one of the under-lying social dynamics that influences most meetings. The answer establishes a person’s motivation and tells us how they will probably behave in the meeting. The basics:

- If *you* are trying to win your target’s respect, attention, and money, he becomes the prize.
- When *your target* is trying to win your attention and respect, you are the prize. (This, of course, is what you want.)

*Prizing* is the sum of the actions you take to get to your target to understand that he is a commodity and you are the prize. Successful prizing results in your target chasing you, asking to be involved in your deal.

**Why is Prizing Important?**

*Successful prizing restores calm and poise to the social interaction.* You won’t have to chase as hard or worry so much about impressing your target. But there’s another important benefit. It reduces your feeling of needing to perform to get a reward.

When you are no longer performing for the money, the frame changes drastically.

The prize frame is the window through which you look at the world that allows you to see yourself as the prize: The money has to earn you, not the other way around. You’re flipping the script.

**Why Does Prizing Work?**

Your pitch is first going to register in the target’s croc brain. And as we discussed in Chapter 1, the croc brain would like to ignore you. But if you are dynamic enough – giving new and novel information – you will capture the croc’s
attention. Once that happens, the croc is going to have one of two primal reactions:

- Curiosity and desire, or
- Fear and dislike

If you trigger curiosity and desire, the croc sees you as something it wants to chase. You become the prize.

Let’s consider three of the most fundamental behaviors of human beings:

1. We chase that which moves away from us.
2. We want what we cannot have.
3. We only place value on things that are difficult to obtain.

If you pitch in front of strangers, you know how easy it is to come across as a little too eager to do business. At the same time, you might make it seem too easy to get what you have. All your audience has to do is nod, and you will do everything else – it’s too obvious that you’re willing to do anything at all to make them happy.

*The problem with this approach is that if it is true that people only value things that are hard to get, you are not hard to get. There’s no challenge. Behaving this way means that you are failing to prize.*

**Prizing 201: Avoiding the Mistakes**

The prize frame works only if certain conditions are fulfilled. In Prizing 101, you learned two basic ideas:

1. *Make the buyer qualify himself back to you.* Do this by asking such questions as, “Why do I want to do business with you?”
2. *Protect your status.* Don’t let the buyer change the agenda, the meeting time, or who will attend. Withdraw if the buyer wants to force this kind of change.

Prizing 201 offers additional lessons beyond the previous learning:

1. There is a great temptation to use trial closes because we’ve all been told this is how selling should be done: “So, are we in the ballpark?” or “What do you think so far?” *Don’t do it. This shows you as being too eager to get a deal done.* Anyway, trial closes are crude and ineffective.
2. Instead, take the time to step back, to withdraw. Work to control the underlying prize frame – then you don’t have to push your ideas so hard. Instead of a trial close, you might issue a challenge (do it with humor or it will feel forced): “So many buyers, yet only one of me. How are you going to compete for my attention.”
I left out the question mark for a reason – because you are not seeking validation from the target. You don’t have to ask it as a question; just issue it as a statement. It’s important to get used to making statements instead of asking questions. Doing it this way shows that you aren’t constantly seeking validation.

3. Make the target perform a legitimate task to earn the deal.

4. The prize frame works best when you change your attitude about money – fully realizing that money is what you have.

Money cannot do anything without you. The money needs you.

When you combine the elements in Prizing 101 and 201, at first it feels like you are walking up the down escalator. This is a natural reaction.

You must embrace the idea that money is a commodity, that it is available in a thousand places, and that it’s all the same no matter where it comes from. Knowing this, it is more likely you will embrace ABL – “Always Be Leaving.” And it’s also likely that you’ll embrace the money that comes with it.

Money is a commodity. Every investment banker and economist you’ll meet will confirm this. Imagine that – Investors reframed as a commodity, a vending machine for money. When you think about it, this makes perfect sense because there are many places to source money, but there is only one you. Your deal is unique among all other frames around this idea, you will be pleased at how it will change the social dynamics in your meetings with investors.

“I’m glad I could find the time to meet with you today. And I do have another meeting right after this. Let’s get started.” This is always a good start because it tells the audience that there are many like them but only one of you.

As you move into your pitch, find moments to reinforce the other frames you hold. For example, make appropriate comments about the value of your time to strengthen both your time frame and your prize frame.

Remember, small acts of defiance and denial, combined with humor, are extremely powerful in maintaining your frame control and in reinforcing your high status. Humor is important here – don’t leave it out, or I guarantee that you will encounter unpredictable responses.

Chapter 3
Status

Status plays an important role in frame control. How others view you is critical to your ability to establish the dominant frame and hold onto the power you take when you win the frame collision. But most people in business and social interactions view status incorrectly.
You don’t earn status by being polite, by obeying the established power rituals of business, or be engaging in friendly small talk before a meeting starts. What these behaviors might earn you is a reputation for being “nice.” They do nothing for your social position – except reduce it.

Another common mistake is underestimating the value of status. People confuse status with charisma or ego, which are entirely different things. And they mistakenly believe that working to raise one’s social value is foolish or just an act of peacocking. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Every interaction is affected by pecking order – who is the dominant group member and who are the subordinates. And the moment you enter a room to pitch is a beautiful example of how the social animal inside you works. In those first moments, the alpha and beta social positions are up for grabs.

But it’s not a physical skirmish – it’s the rapid and sometimes instant assessment of each other’s social position.

Within seconds, we each need to decide, for the sake of our own self-preservation, who in this room is the dominant alpha?

And if it turns out that someone else is the dominant alpha and we are the beta, there is a second, even more valuable question: In the short amount of time we have to orient ourselves in this social interaction, can we switch out of the beta position and take the alpha?

People will judge your social status almost immediately, and changing their perception is not easy. But it’s important because your social status is the platform from which you must pitch.

If you are pitching from a lower-level platform, or low social status, your ability to persuade others will be diminished, and your pitch will be difficult, no matter how great your idea or product.

However, if you hold high social status, even on a temporary basis, your power to convince others will be strong, and your pitch will go easily.

What I am saying – and what I have proven to myself and to others – is that you can alter the way people think about you by creating situational status.
Alpha & Beta

It doesn’t matter how well you argue, the way your points are crafted, or how elegant your flow and logic. If you do not have high status, you will not command the attention necessary to make your pitch heard. You will not persuade, you will not easily get a deal done.

As you are now starting to realize, pitching any kind of idea or deal involves playing a complex and tricky status game.

The alpha enjoys most of the attention in a social interaction, even when he’s not demanding it.

When he makes a statement, it’s regarded as true, and the claims go unchallenged.

When you take the high-status position in a social interaction, you feel it, and it is also felt by your audience. Do not underestimate the importance and value of status to your overall success.

Today it’s difficult to find an executive who isn’t familiar with techniques like building rapport, pushing features and benefits, overcoming objections, and trial closing.

As a consequence, after generations of this process-driven business behavior, targets know how the sales game is played. Use this stuff, and they will see it coming.

Even the best of these techniques are now so commonplace that clients have developed strong defenses and barriers to block them. These defenses are called beta traps, meaning that you are held in a subordinate position to the target (or buyer) at all times.

There is no substitute for holding a position of high status.

There are ways you can create it instantly.

The first step toward elevating your social status is to avoid the beta traps.

**Beta Traps**

In social interactions and business meetings as in nature, those who hold the dominant alpha rank are able to accomplish more than those holding a lesser rank.

As top dog, their rank is under constant threat, and alphas protect themselves by asserting their authority over their employees and coworkers.
To shield themselves from people of higher social rank who visit them in their work environment, they erect a protective ring of social barriers intended to deflect and demote any threatening alphas.

A beta trap is a subtle but effective social ritual that puts you in the low-status position and works to keep you there, beneath the decision maker you have come to visit, for the entire duration of the social interaction.

Most business environments are surrounded by a moat of beta traps that you already recognize and know: the reception desk, the lobby, the conference room, and any public meeting space in or near the office.

The first beta trap you encounter is the lobby.

When you observe office power rituals, you are signaling to your target that you are a beta.

Your target arrives late, offering a mock apology for his impossible schedule, telling you that he now has only a few minutes and still hasn’t had a chance to review your materials.

And now the decision maker, “Mr. Big,” won’t be able to attend the meeting as planned. Sorry. *At this point, you have been beta trapped and are completely and utterly defeated. You may as well go home.*

Another common beta trap is the conference room. If it’s empty when you arrive, you are usually left alone for several minutes, cooling your heels while you wait for your targets to arrive.

As you wait for the latecomers – the decision makers you really need in the room – conversations are now taking place that do not include you. Others talk to each other as if you were not in the room, which is not only annoying, but it’s also one of the most degrading things one person can do to another.

Then there are public spaces where customers sometimes decide to take a meeting.

In general, public spaces are the most deadly beta traps and should be avoided. For a real pitch, coffee shops are an absolute last resort. I will mention one more public beta trap because it’s common: trade shows and conventions.

When you are held down in beta position, the only tool you have at your disposal is emotional manipulation.

There is much better and more natural way to attract business opportunities. You simply elevate your social value, and it’s easier to do than you might think.
The cardiac Surgeon and the Golf Pro.

When the surgeon takes a lesson with the golf pro, the status of each suddenly becomes fluid. Something called situational status takes over. Out on the golf course, whatever wealth, power, and popularity the surgeon has become irrelevant.

Think about this for a moment: Your social value is fluid and changes with the environment you are in – or the environment you create. If you wish to elevate your social value in any given situation, you can do so by redirecting people into a domain where you are in charge. This is easier to do than you might think.

The first impression we make on another person is based on that person’s automatic calculation of our social value. As a survival mechanism, the other person’s brain is making it a priority to understand where you fit in the social structure.

The person will not necessarily even consciously think about this.

Elevating Your Social Status

The first thing you do when you meet with a target is to establish local star power. If your meeting happens to be on your turf, like the golf pro or the French waiter, use your domain expertise and locational knowledge to quickly take the high-status position.

If you are meeting in the target’s domain – his (or her) office or at an off-site location – you must neutralize the person holding high status, temporarily capture his star power, and redistribute some of his status to others in the room who will support your frame.

The Hedge Fund Manager

A couple of years ago, I took a meeting with Bill Garr, a hedge fund manager. The meeting was arranged by a mutual friend, Dan. Arriving a few minutes early, I checked in with the receptionist and immediately recognized the lobby beta traps. Sign the guest book, here’s your visitor badge, take a seat, and how about a stale cup of coffee? Someone will attend to you shortly.

Looking around the lobby, I made a quick read of the situation. Green marble floors, modern chrome and leather furniture, rich accents, all designed to convey a single message – I'm rich, I'm powerful, fear me, revere me. I knew what this was. I was on a conveyor belt headed straight for a status-crushing machine.

Soon, my forehead would be stamped “Beta”, and I'd have a 15-minute meeting with Bill and then would be shown the door. I knew instinctively that our first frame collision would not yield power to me.
While I waited for Bill, I began to think of another way to acquire high status and take control of the frame.

Eventually, an assistant ushered me back to Bill’s corner office. The level of luxury had been taken up a notch. His private office made the lobby look like a construction trailer.

Teak furniture, Persian rugs, titanium and glass fixtures, a couple of dozen framed pictures of Bill with various politicians and celebrities, and from his windows, a panoramic view of Beverley Hills that rivaled the view from Mulholland Drive.

“Have a seat,” Bill said, without looking up from a document he was reviewing at his desk. I took a seat at the conference table by the window. “No, come over here,” he said, pointing to a low-slung Eames chair in front of his desk. The secretary’s chair, I thought to myself as I took the seat.

Bill was old school and enjoyed using classic power rituals like seating people below him to confirm his position as Lord William.

I began to feel excitement because I have learned that the bigger they think they are, the harder they fall when my hookpoint is set. But I could sense that it was going to be a real challenge to get there.

Bill pressed a button on his phone and said, “Gloria, please ask Martin and Jacob to step in.” A moment later, two smart-looking Ivy League MBAs came trotting in, taking subordinate seats on either side of mine. I’m surrounded, I thought. Points for style, Bill.

Bill reached into a rare Jean Cocteau ceramic bowl sitting on his credenza and plucked out a large red apple. As he did, he asked me to hold on another moment while he asked Gloria to e-mail someone he had forgotten to call.

Turning back to me and his underlings, he propped one foot against a desk drawer and took a large bite from his apple. He set it on his desk while he searched for a napkin, and that was when I saw my first opportunity.

While he was chewing on his bite of fruit, I tried to get some kind of frame control. “Look guys, I only have 15 minutes, so I’m going to get right to it. This is the deal I’m working on,” and I quickly briefed the group on the project. But this frail attempt didn’t accomplish much.

The status gap between us was too big to overcome with just frame control. I could see that Bill was hearing every third word – he was more interested in his apple than in the opportunity I’d come to offer.

I made a good opening and my pitch was progressing, but my status was still too low to have any chance at getting this deal to the closing table.
I’m good at this stuff, I said to myself. Don’t force an error. Wait for it.

That was when I saw the golden opportunity. After years of dealing with similar – but not as difficult – social situations, the idea formed in my head, and I knew how to crush his frame, captivate his attention, and establish high status for myself with one simple move.

I said, “I need a glass of water. Excuse me” and raced for the kitchenette I had seen on the way in. There I grabbed a glass of water, a paper towel, and a plastic knife. I thought, If this doesn’t work, Bill is going to grab this knife and kill me with it.

I walked back in but didn’t sit. I said, “Listen, Bill, I hope that isn’t how you do deals,” nodding toward the apple that already had a bite out of it. “In a real deal, everyone needs a piece. I’ll show you what my deals look like.” I reached for the apple on the desk. “May I?” Not waiting for an answer, I took the apple, cut it in two, and took half for myself.

As I returned the half-apple to the place on the desk where Bill had set it, you could hear the roar of silence. The do-boys Martin and Jacob were stunned, and Bill was staring at me with mean and squinty eyes. I took a bite of apple, chewed it quickly, complimented its flavor, and commented a little more on how our deals always have been split fairly with investors.

Then I finished the pitch, acting as natural and as informal as if I were having a conversation in my living room with friends.

The three of them listened to every single word from that moment on. I focused intently on the parts of the deal in which I had expertise. Like Benoit or the golf pro, I was working hard to establish local star power.

When I had finished, and before Bill could speak, I quickly began to pull away. “Whoa, look at the time,” I said a little comically, glancing at my watch, “I’ve got to run. Listen, guys, thanks for your time today. If this works for you, let me know.”

As I reached for my folio and began to slide out of the chair, Bill waved his arm in the air and said, “Wait, wait. Wait a minute, Oren.” And then he started hysterically laughing. This relieved the tension for Martin and Jacob. They smiled and laughed nervously with their boss, and I sat as straight-faced as I could while Bill got the huge laugh out of his system.

“I can definitely see why Dan said I should meet with you. Listen, tell me again who else you have in this deal.”

The hookpoint was made. For the next 20 minutes, I answered questions and exchanged information with Martin and Jacob, who were tasked with the due diligence, and I continued pulling away, looking at my watch, worried about arriving late to my next meeting.
Finally, I stood up to leave. As I was shaking Bill’s hand, he said, “If Marty and Jake tell me the numbers check out, I’m in.”

What this example demonstrates is that a well-chosen, well-timed friendly but disruptive act will dethrone the king in a single stroke. In that brief, shocking moment when no one is quite sure what you’ve just done, that is when your frame takes over and when high status transfers to you.

To keep my frame strong, after the apple thing, I just ignored anything that didn’t advance the pitch. This is an important lesson. In general, just ignore conversation threads that don’t support your deal, and magnify ones that do. I kept talking about the deal – you’ll see specifically some of the things I talked about in Chapter 4.

Here is a quick review of what happened in Bill's office that day:

1. I found myself in Bill’s office with no frame control and in the beta position.

2. I perpetrated a mildly shocking but not unfriendly act that caused a new frame collision.

3. As the shock of my action wore off, the attention of the targets did not waver – believe me, it never does when you do something like this – and I continued accumulating status like a video gamer collecting power stars as each of the targets advances to new levels. The faster you grab status, the more is available for you to take.

4. As I captured attention, I then shifted my focus to acquiring local star power and the alpha status.

5. I got local star power by using information dominance to quickly shrink the frame around my area of specialization, making me unassailable. Because I was the expert, no one could undermine my deal points.

6. Using my newly acquired local star power, I quickly moved the discussion to a level where I could not be challenged by using the primary core values of hard work, domain expertise, and moral authority – which we will discuss in a moment.

7. The moment I was done with my pitch, I began to pull away and kept pulling away until I finally left the office – but not before I had set the hookpoint and received a decision.

These rules are applicable to any situation where you are pitching on someone else’s territory.
Here are some other important things to remember:

- If you think you'll start a meeting from the beta position, always be on time for the appointment. When you are late, you are giving away power. It’s difficult to establish strong frames when you can’t play the game of business by its most basic rules.
- Momentum is key. Create high status immediately. Do not hesitate. Choose a frame, and force a collision at the most opportune moment – and do it early. The longer you wait, the more you reinforce the status of your target.
- Avoid social rituals that reinforce the status of others. Idle social banter diminishes your status.
- Have fun. Be popular. Enjoy your work. There is nothing as attractive as someone who is enjoying what he or she does. It attracts the group to you and allows you to build stronger frames and hold them longer.

Just remember, this process is geared to build and seize situational status, which is temporary. Once you leave the social encounter, it’s wiped out. Gone. And if you come back later, you’ll have to start over and build it again. Even if that’s only five minutes later.

**Seizing Situational Status**

Here are the steps involved in elevating your status in any situation. You will recognize some of these actions from framing, and for good reason. Frame control and status are closely related.

1. Politely ignore power rituals and avoid beta traps.
2. Be unaffected by your customer’s global status (meaning the customer’s status inside and outside the business environment).
3. Look for opportunities to perpetrate small denials and defiances that strengthen your frame and elevate your status.
4. As soon as you take power, quickly move the discussion into an area where you are the domain expert, where your knowledge and information are unassailable by your audience.
5. Apply a prize frame by positioning yourself as the reward for making the decision to do business with you.
6. Confirm your alpha status by making your customer, who now temporarily occupies a beta position, make a statement that qualifies your higher status.

The last step in this sequence is of vital importance, and it’s not as scary as it sounds. As I pointed out earlier in this book, I do not abuse the power I am holding by committing overt acts of dominance. Instead, I am playful, with lots of give and take that makes doing business fun.

One of the best ways to get a customer to confirm your alpha status is to make him defend himself in a light-hearted way.
I may say something like, “Remind me again why in the world I want to do business with you?”

This usually elicits a few guffaws – and a serious response amid the laughter: “Because we’re the largest bank in California, Oren.”

To which I say, “Yeah, that’s good, I’ll keep that in mind.” It needs to be playful and interesting, with just a little edge to it.

Keep the customer qualifying back to you as long as you can. Do it as much as possible right up to the point where it becomes a little awkward – or is just taking too much time. Ask another qualifying question: “Have you ever done a deal this large before?”

This is the best way I’ve found to get an audience to qualify my dominant frame.

Now that you have an understanding of frames and how to create and use status to support frame control, let’s move on to the heart and soul of my method – the pitch.

Chapter 4
Pitching Your Big Idea

In 1953, molecular biologists James Watson and Francis Crick introduced the world to the double-helix DNA structure, the so-called secret of life, widely considered the most important scientific discovery of the twentieth century.

The presentation earned Watson and Crick the Nobel Prize. And what is most striking about this accomplishment is that the full presentation takes just five minutes to read aloud. That’s the complete presentation – introducing the secret of life, explaining it in detail, and showing how it works.

No company in America should let its executives pitch for an hour.

Pitching the Big Idea

And if you’re the front man, the guy who has to take a big idea on the road and pitch it, you need to know exactly how to give a complete presentation in a much shorter time frame than most.

You can’t afford to run longer. The audience’s brain won’t give you more time. And worse, when attention runs dry – after about 20 minutes – the brain starts forgetting things it has already learned. Talk about going in reverse.

As soon as the pitch or presentation begins, one critical thing must happen: The target must feel at ease. In the vast majority of cases, they don’t because they
don’t know how long they’re going to be stuck listening to you, and you’re a stranger.

Most people just don’t want to sit through an hour-long pitch. To put them at ease, I have a simple solution: It’s called the time-constraint pattern.

This is what you say, exactly, to let the target know he isn’t trapped in the typical hour-long-meeting: “Guys, let’s get started. I’ve only got about 20 minutes to give you the big idea, which will leave us some time to talk it over before I have to get out of here.”

Doing it this way puts the target at ease. It shows that you know what you’re doing and that you’re a pro. Anything can be pitched in 20 minutes by a pro. It also shows that you’re busy because you have a strong idea and you can’t hang out too long in a single meeting.

What’s important here is not your mastery over the details but your mastery over attention and time. Instead of trying to achieve what is virtually impossible – holding the target’s attention for longer than 20 minutes – we need to observe the limits of the human attention span.

You’re going to make the pitch in four sections or phases:

1. Introduce yourself and the big idea: 5 minutes.
2. Explain the budget and secret sauce: 10 minutes.
3. Offer the deal: 2 minutes.
4. Stack frames for a hot cognition: 3 minutes.

Phase 1: Introduce Yourself and the Big Idea

Following this formula, the very first thing you need to do – even before you think about explaining your idea – is to give people your background. But you have to do this in a specific way; your success depends on how well (and how fast) you do it.

“What’s your background?” or “How’d you get started in this?” At this point, you can begin the pitch, starting with your track record of successes. Not a long rundown of all the places you worked. Not all the projects you were tangentially involved with. Not your whole life story.

The key to success here is making it about your track record. Things you built. Projects that actually worked out. Successes. Spend less than two minutes on it and definitely not more – and don’t worry. Before your pitch is over, the target is going to know a whole lot more about you.
When a friend, Joe, was getting funding from Boeing, here’s how he did it:

1. “My degree is from Berkeley. I did my MBA at UCLA.

2. After that I was at McKinsey for four years, but really, my only homerun there was the sales program I did for Lexus. Saved them about $1.5 million, and they still use it today.

3. I left consulting six months ago to work on the 'big idea.'”

Yes, Joe has done a lot more than that over the years, but so what. Only his big wins are worth talking about at this point.

The “Why Now?” Frame

It’s vitally important that the target knows that your idea is new, emerging from current market opportunities and that it’s not some relic left over from bygone days.

There are unspoken questions in the target’s mind as to why your idea is relevant and important and why it should be considered as important now.

Three-Market-Forces Pattern: Trendcasting

When you describe your idea, project, or product, first give it context by framing it against these three market forces or trending patterns that you believe are important.

1. Economic forces. Briefly describe what has changed financially in the market for your big idea. For example, are customers wealthier, is credit more available, is financial optimism higher? Increases or decreases in interest rates, inflation, and the value of the dollar are considered as prime examples of forces that have significant impact on business opportunities.

2. Social forces. Highlight what emerging changes in people’s behavior patterns exist for your big idea. An obvious example in the market for automobiles, concern over the environment – a social force – is driving demand for electric vehicles.

3. Technology forces. Technological change can flatten existing business models and even entire industries because demand shifts from one product to another. In electronics, for example, change is rapid and constant, but in furniture manufacturing, change is more gradual.

Describe the genesis of your idea, how it evolved, and the opportunity you saw as it was emerging. The backstory of the idea is always interesting to the target.
The three basic steps are:

1. **Explain the most important changes in our business.** Forecast the trends. Identify important developments – both in your market and beyond.

2. **Talk about the impact of these developments on costs and customer demand.**

3. **Explain how these trends have briefly opened a market window.**

**Economic force.** The cost of making this product has just gone below the $10 mark. This means that the retail price can be $69. We’ve been waiting two years to hit this price point.

**Social force.** One of the changes in our society is that people don’t get enough sleep or even the right kind of sleep. While this problem is growing only 1.8 percent a year, awareness of it is skyrocketing. People know that they need better sleep; it is a hot topic at all levels of society.

**Technology force.** This device requires a controlling chip and solenoid that now can be manufactured small enough and at a controllable price, allowing us mass-market capabilities.

By starting your pitch with the three market forces, your idea now enjoys a prominence that it did not have before. Now your idea has a history, an exciting evolutionary path to the present time, and credibility.

The idea is displayed against the economic, historical, and sociologic changes that made it emerge from the shadows – but it has just barely emerged. You were alert and saw the potential and are now developing it.

**Movement is a critical element in the “Why now?” frame.** Your target needs to understand the forces that are pushing your deal and to understand that your success is inevitable and imminent as a consequence of these greater forces.

**A huge part of the brain is devoted to detecting movement.**

You don’t show people a static picture of how the world would be if your plan were implemented, but instead you show them how your idea is moving away from the current standard to a new way of doing things.

There is one more detail about how the brain works that you need to know, and it’s called **change blindness.**

Once you know this fact about how your audience’s mind works, you realize that you cannot just show audience members two possible states and hope that the difference captures their attention. You need to show them the movement from one to the other.
We are not wired to see or hear a static pitch: “That was the old way, but this is the new way.” That can trigger change blindness, where the target won’t get your deal at all. The formula I’ve just given you, the three changing market forces, overcomes the potential for change blindness.

With three market forces coming into alignment, you are literally showing the mind’s eye how the market is moving to benefit your big idea.

Here’s an example of my colleague Joe giving a pitch:

“In recent years, there hasn’t been much going on in the business of building new airports. In fact, it would be fair to say that the market has been dead. But now things are heating up. Three major forces are changing the market. First, banks have started lending to aviation projects. Second, the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) is now issuing building permits. Third, our main competitor is excluded from bidding on this deal because of a conflict of interest.”

**Introducing the Big Idea**

This does not take 15 minutes. It takes 1 minute. You don’t have to explain the big idea in great detail. Oh, I know you want to. It’s instinctive: First, introduce yourself; then dive into details. I get the same urges. And this seems like the perfect time to do it.

*But it’s not time for details.* Your target doesn’t want the deal yet. So the pitch temperature is cool. Lots of details will turn it cold. The details can come later. First, you will establish the big idea using an *idea introduction pattern.* The venture capitalist Geoff Moore developed this pattern in 1999, and it still works today.

**The Idea Introduction Pattern**

This idea introduction pattern goes like this:

“For [target customers]  
Who are dissatisfied with [the current offerings in the market].  
My idea/product is a [new idea or product category]  
That provides [key problem/solution features].  
Unlike [the competing product].  
My idea/product is [describe key features].”

Here’s an example of a quick introduction for a big idea called the “EnergyTech 1000.”
Example 1

“For companies with large buildings in California and Arizona
Who are dissatisfied with their aging solar panels.
My product is a plug-and-play solar accelerator
That provides 35 percent more energy from old panels.
And unlike the cost of replacing panels,
My product is inexpensive and has no moving parts.”

That's it. The big idea can be introduced with this pattern in about one minute. Here's another example of the idea introduction pattern.

Example 2

“For busy executives
Who don’t have enough workspace on their computer monitor.
My product is a visual array
That provides eight flat-screen monitors, linked together, that can fit on any desk.
Unlike the common do-it-yourself solutions, having just two or three monitors,
My visual array lets executives use Excel, Firefox, Word, Gmail, Skype,
Photoshop, Explorer, and TradingDesk at the same time with no confusing windows.”

Here’s how Joe used the idea introduction pattern to introduce his airport deal.

Example 3

“For investors needing a 10 percent cash yield or better
Who are dissatisfied with risky investments such as stocks.
My airport deal is a project with low risk and lots of protection
That provides a current cash flow.
And unlike most development projects, you can cash out any time you want.”

Certainly this does a lot to capture the target’s attention. It is important to realize, however, that capturing the target’s attention doesn’t mean that you are commanding attention.

The rudimentary model of how attention works goes like this: We notice things that have movement through space and time because they are likely to be important. But there’s a catch – a lot of the time things that move are also things we have to run away from.

Starting from this premise, in the pitch we want to create attention without threat. This is why I have come to believe in – and rely on – the idea introduction pattern, because, of all the ways to introduce an idea, it does the least to trigger threat avoidance in the croc brain.
Neuroscientist Evian Gordon is convinced that minimizing danger and threats around us is “the fundamental organizing principle of the brain.” As I’ve said before, the croc brain doesn’t think about threats too deeply. It just reacts.

It doesn’t stop to research whether the snake coming toward us is a copperhead or a cottonmouth.

Although this natural defense mechanism is beneficial in evolutionary terms, researchers believe that when we enter social situations (like a boardroom where we are expected to pitch), there’s one undeniable fact – we sense a potential threat to our own wellbeing.

For example, we could get rejected. We could embarrass ourselves. We could lose the deal or lose face. When these social threats appear, the threat-avoidance system in our own brain starts pumping adrenaline and other neurotransmitters.

Social threats engage the same threat-response system in the brain as physical threats do.

If you don’t use the idea introduction pattern to deliver the big idea (or some other highly controlled way to encapsulate the big idea), here’s how trouble can start brewing. First, the target picks up on your anxiety. Second, when you see the target get uncomfortable, you get more tense; you look tense.

Third, an endless feedback loop starts: The targets senses your anxiety, and a similar threat response triggers in his system.

The idea introduction pattern breaks the idea down to the essential basics: Here’s what it is; here’s who it’s for; and here’s who I compete with. No anxiety, no fear, no drama.

• First, you put the target at ease by telling him in advance that the pitch is going to be short, just about 20 minutes, and that you’re not going to be hanging around too long afterward.

• Then you give your background in terms of a track record of successes, not a long list of places and institutions where you simply “punched the clock.”

• Next, you show that your idea is not a static flash of genius. Rather, there are market forces driving the idea, and you are taking advantage of a brief market window that has opened.

• Because the brain pays attention to things that are in motion, you paint a picture of the idea moving out of an old market into a new one.

• Last, you bring the big idea into play using the idea introduction pattern. Now the target knows exactly what it is, who it’s for, who you compete with, and what your idea does better than the competition’s.
However, this method should not imply that everything in your pitch must be simplified and reduced – you’ll be delivering plenty of complex and detail-oriented information soon.

**Phase 2: Explain the Budget and Secret Sauce**

*The opportunities to scare the croc brain seriously multiply when you start to explain how stuff works.*

I realize that what comes next goes against conventional wisdom, but what I’ve discovered is that *simplicity doesn’t really matter.*

*What you really want to do is tune the message to the mind of the target.*

This is why it’s so important to understand how the croc brain reasons. I’ve concluded that *ideas you come up with using your problem solving brain – the neocortex – must be intentionally retuned for the croc brain that will receive them.*

Early in my work to figure this stuff out, I stumbled onto something cognitive psychologists called “theory of mind” that supports this. *When you have a working theory of mind, you are able to understand how thoughts, desires, and intentions of others cause them to act.*

When someone can only see a situation one way, their theory of mind is weak. When you have a strong theory of mind, you recognize how other people have different perspective – and that they know different things about the situation, and that their desires are not always the same as your desires.

A strong theory of mind also will let you know that anything involving statistics needs to be highly simplified. *The croc brain hates thinking about probabilities.* Our advanced society had to invent complex formulas and equations for statistics exactly because our brains are not wired to think about statistics on their own.

While there’s ongoing debate about what “complexity” the average audience will like and dislike, one things is certain: *If you’re describing relationships between people, you can provide plenty of detail.* The brain is really good at understanding complex human relationship.

As I look back on my experiences, two giant realizations tower above all others:

*Realization 1:* It doesn’t matter how much information you give, a lot or a little, but instead how good your theory of mind is. In other words, it’s important how well you can tune your information to the other person’s mind.

*Realization 2:* All the important stuff must fit into the audience’s limits of attention, which for most people is about 20 minutes.
Get Their Attention

Studies of vigilance show that the targets generally can’t focus on an idea for more than a few minutes.

People’s minds wander. Distractions, from inside the person and the outside world, are constantly competing with your pitch.

*The brain is still a cognitive miser – it wants to exert as little energy as possible figuring out you and your idea.*

*Attention will be given when information novelty is high and will drift away when information novelty is low.*

No one can seriously question that getting and holding attention are the biggest reasons a pitch either connects with the target and succeeds or misses the target and fails.

What is Attention?

*To control attention, I have always felt that it’s important to know what it’s made of.*

Attention is just that – a cocktail of chemicals served up to the brain as a lubricant for social interaction. You need to know how to blend this perfect cocktail and when to serve it.

*When a person is feeling both desire and tension, that person is paying serious attention to what’s in front of him or her.*

It comes down to the presence of two neurotransmitters: dopamine and norepinephrine.

*Dopamine is the neurotransmitter of desire.*
*Norepinephrine is the neurotransmitter of tension.*
Together they add up to attention.

If you want someone’s undivided, fully engaged attention, you have to provide these two neurotransmitters. These two chemicals work together – you need them both to be coursing through the crocodile brain of the target. But each has a different triggering mechanism.

To give a dopamine kick and create desire, *offer a reward.*
To give a norepinephrine kick and create tension, *take something away.*

*What Does Dopamine Do?* Dopamine is the chemical in the brain that chases rewards.
Dopamine levels rise in the brain when you see or hear about something you want. When you see a person acting curious, open-minded, and interested in something – it’s dopamine that’s motivating them.

Dopamine release in the brain is connected to pleasure activities, such things as food, sex, and drugs. But now brain scans show that dopamine isn’t exactly the chemical of experiencing pleasure. Instead, it’s the chemical of anticipating a reward.

In his book, *Satisfaction*, Dr. Greg Berns explains this: How do you get more dopamine flowing in your brain? NOVELTY. A raft of brain imaging experiments has demonstrated that novel events... are highly effective at releasing dopamine. Your brain is stimulated by surprise because our world is fundamentally unpredictable.

You create novelty by violating the target’s expectations in a pleasing way. Let’s review. When you introduce something novel to the target’s brain, a release of dopamine occurs. This triggers desire. For example:

- A short product demo provides novelty.
- A new idea provides novelty.
- Good metaphors for otherwise complex subjects provide novelty.
- Bright objects, moving objects, and unique shapes, sizes, and configurations all provide novelty.

You want the audience’s full attention, and you want to erase everything else audience members are paying attention to, so introduce novelty.

*How Dopamine Leads the Feeling of Novelty.* Dopamine motivates the human body to act on some things and ignore others.

Getting what you expected to get produces no dopamine kick, but a novelty in the form of an unexpected gain gives the brain a blast of dopamine. On the other hand, if a reward you expected fails to materialize, then dopamine dries up, and negative feelings start happening.

*Not enough, and there is no interest in your or your ideas; too much, and there is fear or anxiety.*

Earlier we also talked about the importance of a simple introduction to your big idea but that simple is not always better. The dopamine kick explains why: *People enjoy some intermediate level of intellectual complexity.*

It has been argued that people are curious about things they cannot explain but that seem explainable – mystery stories work this way. And this, of course, is why novelty is so important in the pitch. Curiosity is the roc brain becoming interested – feeling like it’s safe to learn more.
Curiosity derives from an information gap – the difference between what you know and what you want to know. This is the addictive quality of curiosity – and what you are trying to create for the target: curiosity about the big idea.

It’s only when the target feels that he knows enough to fully understand your big idea that the curiosity ends – and he becomes satiated. At that point of satiation, whether you recognize it or not, the pitch is over.

Novel information has the potential to trigger one of two responses – retreat or exploration. Curiosity is a feeling of novel information taking on the second, exploratory path, which is the first step toward a satisfying intellectual experience.

*When a signal from the pitch tells the target there is something new to be discovered, dopamine is released in the brain.* Unexpected (and pleasant) rewards release more dopamine than expected ones. But dopamine has a dark side, too; if the target is expecting a reward and don’t get it, dopamine levels fall off fast.

And when dopamine levels drop that fast, the feeling of stress is just around the corner. Not only does the target stop taking in new information from you, but he starts forgetting the information you’ve already delivered.

While dopamine is the chemical of curiosity, interest, and desire, it can’t generate attention without norepinephrine, which tends to create tension, and this is why I call it the *chemical of alertness.*

### Tension

In the earlier discussion of novelty and desire, I talked about just half the formula for creating attention. The other half of that formula is *tension.* First, let’s start with some definitions: *Tension* is the introduction of some real consequences to the social encounter to the social encounter.

It’s the response to a clear and unequivocal realization that something will be gained or lost. It is letting the target know that there are high stakes. *Tension indicates consequences and therefore importance.*

There’s no reason for the target to pay attention when there are no stakes – when tension is absent.

*The two parts of the attention cocktail are novelty and tension, which in a pitch work together in a feedback loop for about 20 minutes until – no matter what you do or how hard you try – they get out of balance and then stop working altogether.*

Tension comes from conflict. Some beginning presenters want to rely on their charisma (a pure form of novelty) and try to avoid all conflict in their pitch narrative. They want everyone to play nice. Only smiles, no grimaces.
But in narrative – and frame-based pitching, you can’t be afraid of tension. In fact, you have to create it.

There are three tension patterns, each with an increasing level of intensity. These are conversational patterns you can use at any point in a presentation when you sense the target’s attention dropping.

**Low-Key, Low-Intensity Push/Pull Pattern.**

PUSH: “There’s a real possibility that we might not be right for each other.”

*Pause. Allow the push to sink in. It must be authentic.*

PULL: “But then again, if this did work out, our forces could combine to become something great.”

**Medium-Intensity Push/Pull Pattern.**

PUSH: “There’s so much more to a deal than just the idea. I mean, there’s a venture-capital group in San Francisco that doesn’t even care what the idea is – they don’t even look at it when a deal comes in.

The only thing they care about is who the people are behind the deal. That makes sense. I’ve learned that ideas are common, a dime a dozen. What really counts is having someone in charge who has passion and experience and integrity. So if you and I don’t have that view in common, it would never work between us.”

*Pause.*

PULL: “But that’s crazy to think. Obviously you value people over smart ideas. I’ve met corporate robots before that only care about numbers – and you are definitely not a robot.”

**High-Intensity Push/Pull Pattern.**

PUSH: “Based on the couple of reactions I’m getting from you – it seems like this isn’t a good fit. I think that you should only do deals where there is trust and deals you strongly believe in. So let’s just wrap this up for now and agree to get together on the next one.”

*Pause. Wait for a response. Start packing up your stuff. Be willing to leave if the target doesn’t stop you.*

There’s a two-way connection between pushing and pulling that, when it operates simultaneously, introduces enough tension to create alertness. If you always pull the target toward you, he or she becomes cautious and anxious.

Constantly pulling someone in, also known as selling hard, is a signal of neediness. It’s a balancing act, of course, because if you are constantly pushing them away, they will take the hint and leave.
To hold your target’s attention, there must be tension – a form of low-level conflict – guiding the interaction. If there’s no conflict, the target may be politely “listening,” but there’s no real connection. The target is thinking, “He seems like a nice guy, and his idea seems good, but I have other things to worry about right now.”

As businesspeople, we come together to find solutions to problems – not to admire problems that have already been solved for us. If you don’t have a series of challenges for the target to overcome – with pushes and pulls and tension loops – then you don’t have a pitch narrative.

A pitch narrative can be thought of as a series of tension loops. Push then pull. Create tension. Then resolve it.

When there’s no tension between you and the target, there’s no interest in what happens. The target also has no emotional involvement in what’s going on. In other words, the target doesn’t much care about what you do, why you’re doing it, or what happens to you after you leave.

Without tension loops, nothing is compelling the reader to stay with the pitch storyline.

The Heart of the Pitch

Once you have attention by creating desire and tension – you’re ready to deliver the heart of your pitch. But keep moving fast because this cocktail of dopamine and norepinephrine you’re serving is sloshing around in the brain of the target in the right combination for just a few minutes.

The greatest problem in short-form pitching is deciding what details and specifics to single out for attention – what to leave in and what to leave out.

The main requirement is that you understand that what’s happening in your mind is not what’s happening in the target’s mind. Package the information for the croc brain, as I described in Chapter 1. Big picture. High contrast. Visual. Novel. With verified evidence.

Before you decide to spend too much time on this part of the presentation, remember that the following items are a simple punchlist of issues that most pitches have to cover.

What we need is a way to present this material without the target becoming too analytical about it.

When it comes to a choice of what to focus on when pitching the plan that will make the big idea work, I would start by presenting the budget because most people screw this up. It’s your chance to be different.
Pitching Numbers and Projections

In his book *High Tech Ventures*, Gordon Bell writes, “Start-ups often prepare absurdly aggressive and optimistic plans, which have a very low likelihood of success, just to maximize the company’s perceived dollar value.”

Your financial projections, whether for a product or a company, are supposed to answer such basic questions as, How strong is the company? What if plans go awry, does the company have enough cash to last a few bad quarters? Do you know how to budget well?

A word of caution, however, as you approach these topics: Every experienced buyer and investor knows that you will be doing these two things:

1. Saying that your budgets are “conservative”
2. Preparing *absurdly aggressive and optimistic plans*

*Unrealistic budgets and miscalculating costs are the greatest risks to a growing company*, especially startups. How do you get around the skepticism that surely will fall on your plans? *Focus on demonstrating your skills at budgeting, which is a difficult and highly regarded executive talent.*

Spend almost no time on your skills at projecting revenue – a task any simpleton can perform.

**Competition**

The act of introducing the budgets to the target will lead him or her to wonder, Who does the big idea compete with? This is a valid question that you cannot ignore. The attractiveness of an idea is based on the industry it’s in and how much competition there is.

Here are the two major elements of competition:

1. How easy it is for new competitors to jump in the game?
2. How easy it is for customers to switch out your product with another?

**Secret Sauce**

To avoid the impression that you are a come-and-go idea that will shine brightly in the market one day and be forgotten soon after, you’ll need to show what your competitive advantage is based on. This one thing will give you staying power against competition.

You don’t have to get too fancy here – just don’t take longer than 10 minutes to describe the fundamental workings of your big idea – because you’re going to need the last five minutes to offer the deal and stack the frames.
Phase 3: Offer the Deal

Describe to your audience what they are going to receive when they decide to do business with you. You’ll want to push through this quickly for the sake of time – and get back to framing.

In clear and concise terms, tell the audience exactly what you will be delivering to them, when it will be delivered, and how. If they play a part in this process, explain what their roles and responsibilities will be.

Don’t drill down into a lot of detail; just provide summarized facts that they need to know so that their mental picture of your offering is complete.

Keep it brief but rich in high-level details so there is no question as to what the audience is going to get. And remember, the most important deliverable in your deal is you.

Chapter 5
Frame Stacking and Hot Cognitions

The target knows the essentials: who you are, why this idea is important, how it works, what the “secret sauce” is – and what the target gets when he or she buys. But you’re here to do more than just show and tell; this is a pitch, and you’re here to make a deal happen.

How you have about five minutes left to propose something concrete and actionable – something so compelling that it will cause your target to chase you to get what you have.

Welcome to the next phase.

Phase 4: Frame Stacking and Hot Cognitions

In the course of my activities seeking out money for deals, I discovered that investors do not operate only on cold, rational calculation.

The target can like your deal (or be afraid of it) before he knows much details about it – and the target probably can decide “Yes” or “No” without even knowing what it is. This is hot cognition at work. Deciding that you like something before you fully understand it – that’s a hot cognition

“Oren, once we get through this deal, and we know you can close deals, I’m going to introduce you to our senior trader, John Kincaid.” The seller told me. “He’s a Wildman, just like you. It’s going to be a total love connection, and he’ll get you into the big deals that don’t come to my desk.”
This was *hot cognition 1* – intrigue. I wanted to meet the senior trader and get introduced to these bigger deals.

The bank trader continued: “You know the market is on fire right now, and I have the French, English, and South Africans begging me for this package, but if you work hard and don’t play any funny retrade games, you can earn your way in.” It was true, the market was hot, and those were all players.

This was *hot cognition 2* – prizing. Although I was the buyer, he was asking me to prove myself. I wanted to impress him so that I could earn my way into the deal.

He continued: “I’d love to give you until next week, but this market is not letting me, and you have to make up your mind by Friday.” He said, “I’m totally okay with a ‘No’; there’s no pressure. But Friday is D-day.”

This was *hot cognition 3* – time frame. He gave me just enough time that I felt I had free will. This wasn’t time pressure, just a reasonable time constraint. In the end, the decision was mine to make.

He continued: “And I don’t need to tell you, we’ve done $150 billion in trades this year without a single SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] sanction; right now we’re very particular about our reputation and counterparties.

We do things right over here, so no games, no missing wire numbers, just clean paper. We give you a fair price, and that’s the deal. Can you play by the rules?”

This was *hot cognition 4* – moral authority. I assured him that even though my company was small, just a $250 million blip on the outskirts of San Diego, I knew the rules and could do things right.

Here’s the four frames we’re going to stack in quick succession. (Doing this correctly will move you quickly into the last part of the pitch – the hookpoint.)

*Hot cognition 1*: the intrigue frame.
*Hot cognition 2*: the prize frame.
*Hot cognition 3*: the time frame.
*Hot cognition 4*: the moral authority frame.

**Hot Cognition 1: The Intrigue Frame**

The purpose is to get a large dopamine dump into the croc brain of the target – and build desire. I do this by introducing something the target is sure to want – but cannot get right now.

Here’s the intrigue frame I used recently in a situation where I had given the pitch, offered up the deal, but, before I could blink, was getting hammered with technical questions.
“Guys, before we spend our last few minutes on financial details, let’s decide first if you love me and you love the basic deal. And look, if you decide that you do love the deal, you’re obviously going to meet my partner Joshua,” I tell them. “He’s very interesting guy, a great guy, but a little eccentric.”

I see if I have their attention, while I usually do. People like to hear stories about interesting and slightly eccentric characters.

“Last year, when the markets were volatile, I had this little deal, about $10 million,” I tell them. “It seemed easy because it was such a small deal, and I was the only one working it.

Things were going like clockwork until the bank called and at the eleventh hour and backed out. No explanation; the just pulled out. That left a $3 million hole in the plan – the deal was falling apart fast.

This had come out of the blue, and I was sure that the board of directors of my company would fire me when they found out about the screw up. I knew I had to go to Joshua with this.”

My audience leans in. They want to find out how the problem was solved. And who is this Joshua? They are intrigued.

“Joshua asked me, ‘Oren, is this a good deal?’ I said, ‘Yes, it’s good. Let me tell you all about it.’ But he didn’t stick around to listen. Instead, he went to lunch, without even giving me time to grovel. What could I do? I have to save the investors – and myself too.

I wanted to pitch Joshua, to do anything to convince him to save the deal. He, it seemed, just wanted to eat lunch. I was prepared for my funeral when I got the call from the board. They had mysteriously gotten the $3 million. Joshua had wired it in, from his BlackBerry, while having sushi.

He didn’t ask me to sign any guarantees. He didn’t even ask to see the file. If he hadn’t made that wire, my investors would have lost a lot of money, and my reputation would have taken a hit. The thing about it is that he does this kind of stuff all the time. Wait until you meet him!”

*The target have given you their time because they want to visit a new world to learn about new things and interesting ideas and become involved in the lives of unique, interesting, and talented people.*

No one is seriously going to go into business with you until they know something about how you conduct yourself in tough situations. And it’s no use telling anyone, “I’m a good person.” That’s a useless analytical fact that has no narrative to support it.

People want to know how you have faced obstacles and overcome them. They want to see you in situations that reveal your character.
They want to know that you are someone who rises to whatever level necessary to overcome obstacles and someone who travels in the company of interesting people who are players in whatever game you are playing.

This kind of story, according to Dr. Bruner, puts the target into narrative thinking mode. In narrative mode, we seek to understand reality from events in terms of “human actors striving to do physical things over time.”

And from this simple statement, we draw an important insight: Your big idea is probably an abstract notion. If you are honest with yourself, what is it really? A pile of financials, a bunch of timelines, some customer orders, a marketing plan, an Internet site, and some smart ideas.

You probably have projections, information technology, competitive analysis, and market timing. This kind of info is much too abstract.

The target’s brain does not love abstract concepts – every abstract concept has to be kicked up to the neocortex to be worked on, slowly and painstakingly.

This is why you need analog human narratives to do your explaining. They don’t have to be sent to the neocortex for processing. For example, the Joshua story is anchored in the real world with human characters: The target can relate to the human elements in it.

Why is the intrigue frame best performed as a narrative? Here’s how the target’s brain interprets narratives at the crocodile level:

In narrative mode, the croc brain sees human characters confronting real-world obstacles in time scales that make sense. The croc brain can sort of verify events in time because they are easy to relate to our previous experiences and understanding of how the world works.

If the unfolding of events, as told by you, feels accurate to the target, then truth is assigned to it. A narrative that feels correct in time will convey a strong sense of truth and accuracy.

In stark contrast, facts and figures have no built-in internal mechanism for feeling the truth.

Clearly, you don’t want your target in this paradigmatic thinking. Short and strong narratives that introduce characters who are overcoming real-world obstacles can ignite hot cognitions – which, in turn, push the target out of paradigmatic and analytical thinking mode.
**Narrative Pattern for Building an Intrigue Frame.** Intrigue frames, like all narratives, whether fiction or nonfiction, need structure. Without structure, a story wanders around without purpose and becomes boring. Here’s pattern that will give any of your stories a dramatic arc that end with intrigue.

- Put a man in the jungle.
- Have beasts attack him.
- Will he get to safety?

Clearly, being stuck in the jungle is a metaphor for being in a difficult situation. The attacking beasts are the conflict and tension. These are the problems being faced by the man and the motivation for him to start moving toward safety.

Once he is out the jungle, the tension is resolved and the narrative arc is complete, so hold the man just short of safety as long as you want to use the intrigue frame.

*When we listen to your narrative, it’s not what happens to you that makes you interesting, but it’s what you do about the situations you are in.*

Here’s another example of the pattern, where I built an intrigue frame with a compelling narrative. I was taught this pattern by a Hollywood screenwriter. It’s called the “ticking time bomb”.

*Put a man in the jungle.* I had an $18 million deal some time ago in which I was responsible for finding $6.4 million from investors (the bank would provide the rest of the money). It took about 10 days, and I had commitments on for all $6.4 million. Then, less than 72 hours before closing, something unwanted happened.

*The beats attack.* One of the investors, Jeff Jacobs, went AWOL. His bank would not wire the money without his signature, and I could not close the deal. That was a Friday afternoon. The entire $18 million deal was in jeopardy.

I was imagining the worst: Maybe he was at the bottom of his Malibu swimming pool clutching a bag of bricks and a “goodbye cruel world” note. I spent all weekend looking for him – but he could not be found. By Monday morning, I had less than eight hours to come up with either Jeff Jacobs or his money.

All my phones were ringing. On the other end of the line: the other investors, the bank, the seller, and my partners. Each caller was madder than the last.

*Will he get out of the jungle?* I sat down at the computer and started e-mailing consultants and sales types in our industry. I offered $1,000 for any kind of information on Jacobs. One of them found me a second address and a phone number, which I called. A woman answered.

Luckily, it was Mrs. Jacobs.

“You’re his wife?” I asked.

“Yes sir, I am,” she said.
I was thrilled. “Mrs. Jacobs, I am so glad I found you,” I told her.

“Can you please sign these closing documents on behalf of your husband – they allow for the wife to sign. I would appreciate it so much. I’ll even drive out there [to Palm Springs].”

“Oh, you said this is to help Jeff out?” she asked nicely.
“Yes!” I said.
“Well. You know I would love to do that for you…”
I cut her short, “Great!”

Then she cut me off. “But I’ve been separated from that snake/eyed sonofabitch for 11 years,” she told me, “and I’ll burn in hell before I sign anything to help him out.”

The minute I heard that, I dropped everything and jumped the jet for Palm Springs.

That’s the important fourth step to the narrative pattern building the intrigue frame: Get the man to the edge of the jungle, but don’t get him out of it. In other words, the intrigue is created by the fact that there’s no final resolution.

To hold intrigue and make it work as an emotional event, a hot cognition, I don't complete the story (although it has a truly great ending, and it will always come up later) and instead move to the next frame in the stack: the prize frame.

**Hot Cognition 2: The Prize Frame**

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the prize frame – or prizing – let’s you position yourself as the most important party in the deal, not the people on the other side of the table. Successful prizing flips the frame.

“Guys, I’m glad I was able to find some free time to come here and show you my deal. I don’t always get to meet the buyers. I know we’re having fun here, but I have to wrap up. I have another meeting.

We are busy, and there just aren’t many deals like this – and obviously none that include me – and I’m fortunate to be in demand. Getting serious for a moment, I do have to choose which investors to let in and which to turn away. Before things go any further here, I need to figure out who you people really are.

Yeah, we have your bios and know your reputation. But we have to be cautious about who we bring on board. And I have ti sell you to my partner, Joshua – who is going to want to know why I think you would be good partners.

*Can you give me that – can you tell me why we would enjoy working with you?*”
So what have I done in such a statement? I’ve delivered the prize frame, and the basic elements include.

1. I have one of the better deals in the market.
2. I am choosy about who I work with.
3. It seems like I could work with you, but really, I need to know more.
4. Please start giving me some materials on yourself.
5. I still need to figure out if we would work well together and be good partners.
6. What did your last business partners say about you?
7. When things go sideways in a deal, how do you handle it?
8. My existing partners are choosy.

The prize frame is about cognition that signals that target’s croc brain that you are strong, you are not needy, and you are not going to supplicate for a deal.

Unlike some of the other frames, the prize relies a great deal on how strong your conviction is.

The prize frame doesn’t come only from words that you say. It’s how you’re organized internally. Here’s the internal pattern, the words you say to yourself to fully activate and deploy the prize frame:

I am the prize.
You are trying to impress me.
You are trying to win my approval.

**Hot Cognition 3: The Time Frame**

“Guys, my company, Geomark, is a great deal, and you can’t bluff me about what you are thinking; I know you agree. Consider the situation we’re in. We are here for a third meeting at your corporate headquarters.

Right now I’m looking at your team: four Boeing executives, three engineers, and two of your consultants. Why are you here in force? Because you love the deal. And you should love it. The deal is hot, that’s no secret, and I’ve never used this fact to pressure you, but we can’t ignore it either.

For this reason, we have all got to make a decision about the deal in the next week. Why one week? This time constraint is not under my control: it’s the market working. It’s harsh but true: We have to decide by July 18 if you’re in or out.

*The addition of time pressure to a decision-making event reduces decision quality.*

*There’s a scarcity bias in the brain, and potential loss of a deal triggers fear.* But just because imposing scarcity works well isn’t a recommendation to use it – we
don’t want to taint our deal with the whiff of cheap 1980’s sales tactics. We want the target to see us as a professional agent. To trust us.

So I tend not to use much time pressure at all. Extreme time pressure feels forced and cutrate. But the truth is that time is a factory in every deal. You have to find the right balance between fairness and pressure and set a real time constraint.

Here’s the time frame pattern you can use and follow: “Guys, nobody likes time pressure. I don’t like it, you don’t like it. No one does. But good deals with strong fundamentals are like an Amtrak train, or more like a deal train.

They stop at the station, pick up investors, and have a set departure time. And when it’s time – the train has to leave the station.

“You have plenty of time to decide if you like me – and if you want this deal. If you don’t love it, there’s no way you should do it; we all know that.

“But this deal is bigger than me, or you or any one person; the deal is going ahead. There’s a critical path, a real timeline that everyone hast to work with. So we need to decide by the 15th.”

That’s it. You don’t have to do any more. With just that simple pattern, the time constraint is set. You don’t have to be overt or aggressive with the time pressure.

**Hot Cognition 4: The Moral Authority Frame**

Robert Zajonc, the thought leader on hot cognitions, once wrote, “We evaluate each other constantly, we evaluate each others’ behaviours and we evaluate the motives and consequences of that behavior.” And this, of course, is the key to the reason we stack frames.

Because we are going to be evaluated no matter what happens and what we do, let’s get the evaluation we want, something Zajonc calls wanting.

To create a desire in the target’s mind and to go on from the pitch to the hookpoint, every presenter has to use hot cognitions to create wanting and desire.

In every social situation, there are basic, human, hardwired functions. Let’s call them ritual elements of social encounters.

All social encounters are framed. In light of this, when we think about it, not only do physicians such as Dr. David Scheiner tell us what to do, their frame is so powerful that we are nearly helpless in its presence.

In fact, the doctor frame may be the most powerful frame in the world. Really? The most powerful frame in the world? Let’s explore.
The doctor’s frame has three rules:

Rule 1: Do what I say.
Rule 2: Defer to my expertise.
Rule 3: Accept my conclusions about life (and death).

**Reality Is Waiting to Be Framed**

A hot cognition – or a series of hot cognitions – is a fast method for getting the target’s croc brain to want you and your big idea.

But this is not a ‘sales technique. Stacking frames is not going to work, in my opinion, if you view it as just another type of sales tactic. Those old-fashioned sales techniques are about chasing the neocortex with features and benefits and rational explanations.

“Selling” tempts you to do the three things I dislike the most: (1) supplicate; (2) make a rational appeals to the neocortex, and (3) ask invasive questions. Hot cognitions, on the other hand, do not hit the target like a sales technique.

- **Hot cognitions are primal.** Whenever there’s a rush of excitement, it’s hard to get the neocortex to do any work at all. To protect us from potential physical or social threat, the croc brain hijacks brain function. No analysis gets done. As a result, it’s much easier and natural to react to what’s hot and vivid and moving right in front of us.

- **Hot cognitions are unavoidable.** You might be able to control the expression of emotion, but there’s no way you can get out of the path of having and experiencing it.

- **Hot cognitions tend to be instant and enduring.** Do you like the movie you just watched? Do you like the new model of Ford Mustang? Do you like eating snails? You never sat down to analyze these things; they’re obviously got cognitions – you got a sense of these things the moment you encountered them.

**Hot versus Cold Cognition**

Maybe the best way to define hot versus cold cognition is to compare it to chocolate and spinach. You know the cold, hard facts. Spinach is good for you, it has lots of nutrients, and you should be eating more of it. But when offered a piece of chocolate instead, you go for it.

The acid test of whether your pitch goes well will be: Does the target want to buy your stuff, be a part of your team, or invest in your idea?
How much thinking about your presentation does your target need before he or she forms a preference about it? How “fully and completely” must an idea be presented and thought about, and how much rational analysis needs to be completed before the target decides: “good” or “bad”?

I argue here that as you approach the end of your pitch, you don't need to wait for an evaluation, or the target will wander off into a cold cognition process and think about you: did we like him, did we like his deal?

Instead, stack the four frames, trigger hot cognitions, and create the instant evaluation that ought to be wanting.

If hot cognitions targeted at the croc brain are so powerful, why do most people make presentations in the cold cognition style targeted to the neocortex? Here's why I think people go this way: Our faculties of reason tell us that the neocortex is way smarter than the croc brain.

We think that if we create a message in our own smart neocortex, it should be sent to the target's neocortex, which will do a better job of understanding the pitch.

It makes sense to think this way because the neocortex really is an insanely capable problem solver. It has awesome language and math and creative abilities. It's a Swiss Army knife of mental ability.

By contrast, if the neocortex is like a Swiss Army knife, then the croc brain is a like a rubber mallet – best for simple jobs only. It works on only a few emotions, and those are very limited in scope and range. The croc brain almost seems too simple to “get” our smart ideas.

We think, Who are we going to trust this decision to, the target's infinitely capable neocortex or the emotional and simplistic croc brain? Our intuition tells us to the trust the neocortex. But that's not the right choice.

Let's return to the essential idea from Chapter 1: No pitch or message is going to get the logic center of the other person's brain without passing through the survival filters of the crocodile brain system first. And because of the way we evolved, those filters make pitching anything extremely difficult.

By this position, you know what I'm going to say next: Focus your energy on getting the target's croc brain to want your product. Because, at best, no matter how much you try to sell to the neocortex – it can only “like” your idea.

A hot cognition is the inner certainty of “knowing” something that comes through feeling it. A cold cognition is the certainty of “knowing” something is good or bad by having evaluated it.
As we've said before, hot cognitions are extremely fast. Hot cognitions develop through the ancient brain structures – the brain stem and midbrain – our croc brain. Cold cognitions are analytical and develop in the neocortex.

Cold cognitions are calculated and take time to suggest a solution – this is how the neocortex goes about its business – it aggregates information over time and solves problems.

You can trigger a hot cognition instantly, but cold cognition can take hours or days. Most presentations are set up to take the target down the path of a cold cognition. They try to justify the big idea with facts and information.

Hot cognitions encode value. It's the anticipation of a large financial gain that is emotionally compelling to the target. Actually receiving it is not nearly as exciting.

As one researcher noted, “The human brain acquired its reward-reinforcement system for food, drink, ornaments, and other items of cultural value long before money was discovered.”

The brain thinks of money as it does of food, ornaments, and drugs and records the utility that can be collected by using it only indirectly. There's no cash register or balance sheet up there.

As we have been discussing, reality isn't waiting to be discovered - it's waiting to be framed. By stacking four frames quickly one after the other, you can achieve the hot cognition in the target – helping the target to discover a wanting.

Chapter 6
Eradicating Neediness

Over the years, I have faced a lot of rejection. And the disturbing thing about rejection is that you never really get used to it. It's natural and even unavoidable to feel disappointment when you get a “No.”

We all do. What's certain is that none of us like being rejected. We want to avoid it. In high-stakes situations, we're nearly always anxious about it.

As businesspeople, friends, neighbors and citizens, we believe that when we need something from another person, there is a thin line of empathy that runs through all human hearts.

We believe that we'll be treated well by others just because. But there isn't, and we won't. So we nearly always become anxious and needy.
Showing signs of neediness is about the worst thing you can do to your pitch. It’s incredibly bad for frame control. It erodes status. It freezes your hot cognitions. It topples your frame stacks.

Sure, the investor knows you need money, but giving a hint of neediness or any sign of desperation, plainly put, is like saying, “I’m holding a bomb that could go off at any minute.” Everyone will respond by going on the defensive. Their first reaction is - Run!

_Self-protection is an unconscious reaction that comes from the crocodile brain._

Neediness triggers fear and uncertainty, causing the target’s croc brain to take over – but not in a good way. Its goal is to prevent further threat by effectively blocking out the higher-level brain, which likes to debate and consider and analyze. No time for that. Threats require immediate action.

_Neediness is a signal of threat._ If you display neediness, it is perceived as just the kind of threat that the crocodile brain wants to avoid. Neediness results in avoidance.

When pitches work well, we tend to believe that it was our great idea that impressed the target. Or that our sublime explanation of the big idea was impressive and convincing. However, when pitches fail, we see it through a different lens.

In such cases, we believe that the problem lies with the target, not us. We believe that the target somehow couldn’t see the value of the big idea or that he was the wrong target. But pitches can fail for reasons that are hidden from view.

- “Do you still think it’s a good deal?”
- “So, what do think?”
- “We can sign a deal right away if you want us to.”

This is the purest form of validation seeking and the most lethal form of neediness. And that was the end of that opportunity. Just that fast, the target’s excitement turned to fear and anxiety.

**Why It’s Important to Eradicate Neediness**

Plain and simple, neediness equals weakness. Broadcasting weakness by seeking and validation is often a death sentence. This may sound harsh, but it is true. Neediness – displaying so-called validation-seeking behaviors – will affect all social interactions dramatically.

It is almost redundant to criticize the concept to validation seeking any further. Simply put, there’s almost no way to get through the post pitch time period if you are needy.
What Causes Neediness?

You can tell when you are losing your audience because their growing discomfort is easy to read. They glance at their watches, turn their bodies away from you, cough nervously, and/or close the folder they had been leafing through. There are lots of outwards signs.

When you notice that audience members are uncomfortable, you feel yourself losing the deal. Your anxiety and insecurity start turning into fear, and you begin falling into acceptance-seeking behaviors.

The experience of feeling disappointment creates problems that need to be considered carefully. When we feel even a touch of disappointment, our first reflexive reaction is to cure it by seeking validation, which, of course, broadcasts neediness to the audience.

Now our brain is subconsciously thinking, “If I can just get them to agree to do the deal with me, everything will be okay.” This is what our brain wants to relieve the stress and fear caused by rejection.

If we are lucky and the target decides to give us the deal, all is well again. We instantly feel better, our anxiety fades, our heart-rate returns to normal, and we feel in control.

However, in the panic moment caused by the flash of disappointment, we couldn’t help but signal neediness to our target. Chances are good that he noticed it and will not respond by giving us what we want. What happens then? Further rejection poses the threat for an emotional catastrophe.

In practice, here is how we fall into validation-seeking behaviors:

1. When we want something that only the target can give us (money, an order, a job) we set the stage for neediness.

2. When we need cooperation from the target and can’t get it, it’s frustrating and causes us anxiety. And audiences, at some point, always become uncooperative. Audience members turn their attention elsewhere – usually by texting, scanning e-mail, or taking phone calls.

   They allow interruptions by people coming in and out of the meeting room. Or they cut us short – before we’ve made our key points.

3. Neediness is created inside of us when we firmly believe that the target can make us feel good by accepting our pitch and by saying “Yes.” When we set ourselves up to need the target to accept us, we have trapped ourselves.

   The more we want the target’s desired behavior to occur, the more
neediness we broadcast, and the less likely the target is to give us what we want. It’s downward spiral.

4. Finally, validation-seeking behaviors are triggered in us when the target seems uninterested in our pitch, begins to withdraw, or shifts his or her attention to something else.

At that moment, we have a natural fear response, and the potential for an involuntary expression of neediness is high. Fear and anxiety are emotions that are both natural and reflexive, and they are very difficult to manage.

Even the most common social rituals are loaded with situations that can trip us up, so you really need to pay attention to avoid outward signs of neediness - a reaction that surrenders your status and frame dominance.

Counteract Your Validation-Seeking Behaviors

One dramatic way to eradicate neediness involves going into every social interaction with a strong time frame that you are prepared to use at any moment. This frame communicates, loudly and clearly, that you are needed somewhere else.

But this is just a part of a broader, more comprehensive solution to eradicating neediness. Here’s the basic formula:

1. Want nothing.
2. Focus only on things you do well.
3. Announce your intention to leave the social encounter.

Executing these three steps will calm down the fear circuitry in your own brain. Your increased heart rate, perspiration, rapid breathing, and anxiety will subside slowly.

Once under control, you’ll impress others and make them actually come after you. Most important, the willingness to withdraw demonstrates a self-control, strength, and confidence that most targets will greatly admire.

The three main rules of the Tao:

Eliminate your desire. It’s not necessary to want things. Sometimes you have to let them come to you.

Be excellent in the presence of others. Show people one thing that you are very good at.

Withdraw. At a crucial moment, when people are expecting you to come after them, pull away.
The Tao of Steve is the perfect philosophy to use when you finish your pitch. Use it to stifle the urge to seek approval from your audience. People want what they can't have. So, when you finish your pitch, deny your audience. Start to pull away.

In so doing, you banish insecurity and trigger a powerful prizing effect on your audience. They will come to you.

1. This deal will be fully subscribed in the next 14 days.
2. We don’t need VC money, but we want a big name on our cap sheet that will strengthen our initial public offering (IPO) registration.
3. I think you guys are interesting, but are you really the right investor? We need to know more about you and the relationships and brand value from firm can bring to our deal.

Anatomy of a Pitch

The three rules of eradicating neediness:

1. **Eliminate your desire.** It’s not necessary to want things. Sometimes you have to let them come to you.
2. **Be excellent in the presence of others.** Show people one thing that you are very good at.
3. **Withdraw.** At a crucial moment, when people are expecting you to come after them, pull away.

As the presentation began to take shape, I built it around the four phrases:

*Phase 1:* Frame control, grab status, and introduce the big idea.
*Phase 2:* Explain the problem/solution and our special advantage.
*Phase 3:* Offer the deal.
*Phase 4:* Stack frames for hot cognition.

Pre-pitch Thoughts

Here’s what was running through my head at the last minute:

1. Get the tone right, frame myself as the alpha, seize status, and hit their hot buttons.
2. Deploy a big idea that is human and captures the theme of “building a legacy”.
3. Keep it captivating with visuals that resonate.
4. Create hot cognitions. Make Jeffries and the committee want the idea before they even know the details.
Learning to manage social dynamics is not an intuitive undertaking. Ten years ago, I found myself in many situations where I was the beta. I thought I had to accept this low social status and thought that there was almost nothing I could do to control the frame.

I didn’t even know what a frame was. And I cannot rationally describe to you why in those early days I disliked – even hated – traditional sales techniques.

I just knew what I wanted – a method that requires no blunt-force trauma. No beg-or-bash modalities that aggravate people and make them regret doing business with you. I wanted nothing to do with the anxiety and fear that accompany those beta-trapped, pushy methods.

Beta methods do not exist in my approach for the simple reason that you are not pushing – you are interacting with people using basic rules of social dynamics.

For years I’ve been doing this stuff around the country and the world, and part of what I’ve learned is that the crocodile brain is the same everywhere. There aren’t New York croc brains and California editions and special French ones. Every croc brain responds the same:

- When something is boring: Ignore it.
- When something seems dangerous: Fight/run.
- When something is complicated: Radically summarize (causing information loss) and pass it on in severely truncated form.

With my approach, you are respecting the croc brain by introducing a game, and you are inviting others to play with you. It will feel new and different to everyone involved – because it is.

Instead of flogging people with canned responses and pressure tactics, frame-based interactions excite the senses and engage people in a much more social way. In a world of robotic sameness, this approach will distinguish you from others.

In the most basic sense, what are the frames I have been talking about here? Frames are psychological referencing systems that all people use to gain a perspective and relevance on issues.

Frames influence judgment. Frames change the meaning of human behavior. If a friend rapidly closes and opens her eyes, we will respond differently depending on whether we think this is a physical frame (she blinked) or a social frame (she winked).
Consider the words: *hit, bumped, collided,* and *smashed.* These words tell you the severity of an automobile accident. *Frames shape the underlying meaning of every social interaction.*

It is true, for instance, when we get together for a presentation, meeting, or pitch, that we can’t just conduct a wholesale drop and transfer of information.

You don’t send a cargo container full of information to your customers or potential investors and say, “Here, look through this stuff. See what you can make out of it.” They can’t absorb it, and if they could, they don’t have the time.

This is a part of the presenter’s problem: Deciding what to pitch and how is not like a math or engineering problem that can be worked out by having more and more information to use – which parts of your deal will trigger cold, analytical processing by the neocortex and which parts will engage the hot and vibrant processes of the crocodile brain.

This is exactly why frame control is so crucial. It serves to filter information and provide meaning, bridging the natural disconnect between the you and the target.

It is always the case that frames can simplify complex issues by putting greater emphasis on one interpretation over others. In the process, frames construct a point of view.

And when you set the frame correctly, you control the agenda, which, of course, is important to do because every situation can be seen from many different angles. Frame control is about controlling which angle your deal is seen from.

A frame helps to package a deal in a way that encourages certain interpretations and discourages others.

For instance, during the 1984 presidential campaign, there was considerable concern about Ronald Regan’s age.

Speaking during the presidential debate with Walter Mondale, Regan said, “I will not make age an issue of this campaign. I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent’s youth and inexperience.”

In one sense, this was a beautiful example of frame control in action. Regan changed the underlying meaning of the social encounter and seized the alpha status, building a string, unassailable point of view for the rest if the audience to follow and get behind.

There is a second and equally valuable lesson from this example, and perhaps it is the critical learning of social dynamics: Humor, fun, and light-heartedness are crucial components of every pitch.
As I discussed in Chapter 1, in recent years I finally got the fundamental problem you and I have when we pitch something.

We have our highly evolved neocortex, which is full of details and abstract concepts, trying to persuade the croc brain, which is afraid of almost everything and needs very simple, clear, direct, and non-threatening ideas, to decide in our favor. This realization guided me into the world of frames and status.

Since the beginning of this book, I have offered you two principal insights into social dynamics. The first is structural – you have to package ideas for the croc brain in such a way that you are generating hot cognitions.

In other words, you avoid the kind of cold analysis that is done by the neocortex. Instead, you use visual and emotional stimuli to push target’s primal hot buttons – to create wanting.

The second insight is procedural: You always have to be on the watch for opposing power frames and then win the ensuing frame collisions with better, stronger frames. And then you must further your frame control by perpetrating small denials and showing defiance.

But now, there’s a third element that I believe is fundamental to successful frame control, to seizing alpha status, and to social dynamics in general: humor and having fun.

Certainly, the purpose of perpetrating denials and defiance is to reframe social situations and to prize – that perhaps you aren’t really selling them but that they need to sell you, that your own time is even more valuable than theirs, that under the circumstances, if they try to beta-trap you, you’re willing to withdraw, that you aren’t automatically willing to take the beta position you’re being led into.

But in all this you must use humor as well.

Importantly, the humor is not there to relieve tension. Instead, it’s there to signal that although the tension is real, you are so confident that you can play around a little. Perhaps it’s best to think about it this way: People who have lots of opinions are not uptight, and they don’t take themselves too seriously.

It also signals that framing is a game, and invites others to join in. If you take the power frame from a “master of the universe” and he or she takes it back from you, is that not a challenge to improve your game?

If you talk to frame masters, they’ll tell you that the secret of success is to create tension in a fun way that invites people to join in the frame game.

I mention this because most buyers/customers/investors will try to use the power frame on you. You’ll see it frequently. Don’t worry. It’s a clumsy frame that is easier to disrupt using power-busting, intrigue, prize and time frames.
As easy as the power frame is for you to break, absorb, and control, many others can’t, so buyers will be shell-shocked. Take it easy on them, and don’t take advantage.

In the buyer’s experience, most salespeople submit to their every whim and command: *Meet me at such-and-such inconvenient place; wait for me; start now; no, wait, stop; do this; send me more info;* and so on.

Once they come across someone like you who doesn’t submit to these whims, they take notice, thinking, *This person is interesting. He isn’t falling over himself to impress me like all the others. What’s going on here?*

It’s one thing to acknowledge the power of frames and seizing status but quite another to put the method to use. Becoming a frame master isn’t easy. It takes thought, effort, and will, but the rewards are substantial. The good news – this I a journey that is fun from very start, and if you are doing it right, it remains fun.

In fact, if at any point you find that you are not having fun, something has gone wrong. Get with a colleague or friend who also knows his stuff and backtrack. See where the train hopped the tracks. I’ve had to do this many times.

It’s humbling, but what’s the alternative? Go back to common industry practices like “interview the customer” and “trial closing”?

There is another benefit to becoming a frame master that isn’t immediately apparent but will make a remarkable difference in your life. Over time, you will begin to notice an increase in the velocity of your work and leisure activities.

This is so because strong frames allow you to selectivity ignore things that do not move you forward toward your goals, and such a recognition amplifies your focus on the things that do.

In a natural way, framing keeps you focused on what is most important – human relationships – and prevents you from becoming distracted or burdened by unimportant matters when you are in social situations.

Weak frame and nonessential details bounce off strong frames. Your abilities to discern, judge, decide, and act will vastly improve because the frame guides you.

Throughout this book I have talked about the structure of frames and methods of seizing status. But mastery comes from actually doing it. This book will serve as your guide for a while, but as soon as you can, leave it behind.

Your skills will come from practice, not from being a desk jockey, reading, or browsing the Internet for more learning. And I’m going to insist that you learn this stuff with a colleague or with a group because, as I said before, *learning to manage social dynamics is not an intuitive undertaking.*
Getting Started

When somebody wants to learn frames, social dynamics, and the overall method from me, I always begin this warning: Frame-based social dynamics is strong medicine.

Instead if reciting the same old business clichés that your audience expects to hear, you are jacking into the wetware that controls their brains, their primordial programming. You are simultaneously communicating with them on the surface and below the surface of their consciousness.

If you do it wrong, for example, without humor, poise, and grace, I guarantee that security will be called, and you will be escorted from the building. I don’t want to receive any angry e-mail from you telling me that you’ve just been fired, so please pay attention to the advice I’m about to give you.

Here are the progressive steps to learning the method:

**Step 1:**
Learn to recognize beta traps and how to step around them. This is a low-risk way to train your mind to begin thinking in a frame-based way. As you go about the business of life, look for the beta traps.

Identify anything that is designed to control your behavior, and think of how you would step around it. The key at this stage is to get good at seeing the traps (they are everywhere).

While there is no immediate harm in doing nothing, when you are told to wait in the lobby until called, it’s a test. Remind yourself that if you step into this beta trap, the next one will be even larger and more difficult to overcome.

**Step 2:**
In a gradual way, start stepping around beta traps. It will feel uncomfortable at first, of course, but it will push you forward to the place where it becomes natural and hardly noticeable to you. Work with a partner to practice beta-trap avoidance.

As I said at the start of this book, this method is powered by its simplicity. I’ve been practicing it for over 10 years, and I’ve survived and prospered using only four basic frames and the ability to avoid beta traps.

So don’t overcomplicate this or worry over your lack of technique. It will come naturally to you. Just be sure to have fun at it – that’s the secret to success.
Step 3:
Identify and label social frames. Notice the frames that are coming at you on every level of your life. Power frames, time frames, and analyst frames are everywhere, and they crash into you on a daily basis.

Develop your ability to see them coming, describe them, and discuss them with your partner. Become very good at identifying frames using the unique language of framing.

Step 4:
Begin to initiate frame collisions with safe targets – those who pose no major career risk to you. What I’m saying is, tomorrow, don’t stride into the CEO’s office, grab a sandwich out of his hand, and put your feet up on his desk, telling him that it’s time you and he had a talk about your bonus.

Work with a partner, begin to overtake opposing frames in a fun, light-hearted way. I’m repeating this because it’s so critical: Remember that humor and a soft touch are absolutely necessary.

Without it, you will appear rude and arrogant and will trigger croc brain defense responses instead of engaging your target in a fun and spirited social exchange.

Step 5:
The small acts of defiance and denial you use to take control of a social frame create a certain amount of conflict and tension. This is the point. Push. Pull.

Delivering these acts with a soft touch reassures the target’s croc brain that everything is okay – that there is no clear and present danger. If you are having difficulty at this stage, it is because you are triggering defensive responses, which means you are coming on too strong.

If this is the case, pause. Do not press forward if you are struggling because that means that something is wrong. Find another partner to do this with, choose a different social environment, practice in another venue, or just punch “Reset” and start over.

Step 6:
Frame control cannot be forced because this takes the fun out of it. This is not theater for someone else to enjoy. It’s not a dog and pony show.

It’s a game for your own personal enjoyment – and for a moment, consider why we play games – to enjoy ourselves in a challenging but fair way where we can rack up an win.
If you find yourself forcing the method, fortunately, this is an easy problem to fix. Simply lighten up a little. When you say something that causes a frame collision, do it with a twinkle in your eye and a smile in your heart.

Your target will feel your good will and good humor and respond in a positive way.

Above all, remember that this is not a conventional sales technique. You need not be a back-slapping, guffawing blow-hard to win business from your customers. There is no pressure here, no brute force, and no anxiety.

Instead, this is a fun game that you bring to every target with whom you meet. Simply enjoy every moment, and others will enjoy it with you. It’s nice to know that your continued happiness is what will make you successful. What could be easier?

**Step 7:**
Work with other frame masters. Now that you have developed a basic level of skill, seek out others who are better than you. As with any other artistic or athletic endeavor, apprenticeship leads to mastery faster than going it alone.

Continue to work with others. Like a 10th dan black belt, you never stop refining your technique and honing your mastery. Keep it simple, stick to a few frames that work for you, and avoid complication.

When you become a frame master – and even on your journey to becoming one – you will have the most fun you’ve ever had. I find myself cracking up sometimes in the middle of a pitch, even when the business I’m doing involves millions of dollars.

Why not? *This is a game where you set the rules and then change the rules as needed to maintain your continuous advantage without ever upsetting your opponent.* Imagine that.

The only rule is that you make rules that the others follow. Because you set the agenda and control the frame, this is a game you can never lose. How could that not be fun?

*Pitch Anything* gives you a common vocabulary that will deepen your mastery of the method and ingrain frame-based thinking into your DNA. Here are the most important terms for you to know and to own personally:

- Frame control
- Power-busting frame
- Frame collision
- Prizing
Beta traps
Seizing status
Local star power
Push/pull
Alpha
Hot cognition
Crocodile brain
Neocortex

These terms label the social phenomena that are invisible to others and that used to be invisible to you.

As you advance in your life and career, the challenges you will face will increase in proportion to the responsibilities you bear.

Being a frame master will make those burdens seem lighter, will help others to see you as a sage and trusted leader, and will maintain your social value at a much higher level, even when you are not consciously practicing frame control.

By helping others to view situations and opportunities through your frame, it will make interacting with you seem effortless. It’s easy for others to spend time with a person they agree with, in any setting, and that’s how they feel about you.

So go forth, learn frame control, practice it at every opportunity, and have fun doing so. I wish you much success and I hope that it serves you as well as it continues to serve me. I invite you to learn more about frame control at pitchanything.net.