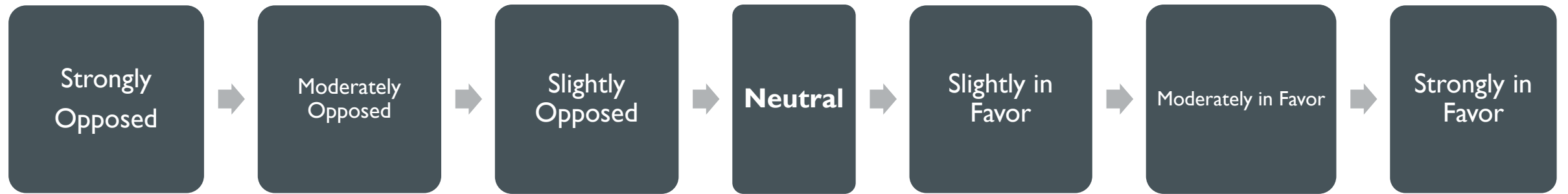# PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER 6

PERSUASION, DEFINED

Persuasion = using deliberate and strategically designed messages intended to change beliefs, attitudes, and/or behaviors

DEGREES OF PERSUASION

Strongly Opposed → Moderately Opposed → Slightly Opposed → **Neutral** → Slightly in Favor → Moderately in Favor → Strongly in Favor

Persuasion involves any movement by a listener from left to right OR from right to left

PERSUASION

- **Beliefs –** an internal feeling that something is true or that something exists

- **Attitudes –** positive or negative orientation toward something

- **Values –** a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life

- **Behaviors –** actions (often resulting from beliefs, attitudes, and values)

MAIN THEORIES OF PERSUASION

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING
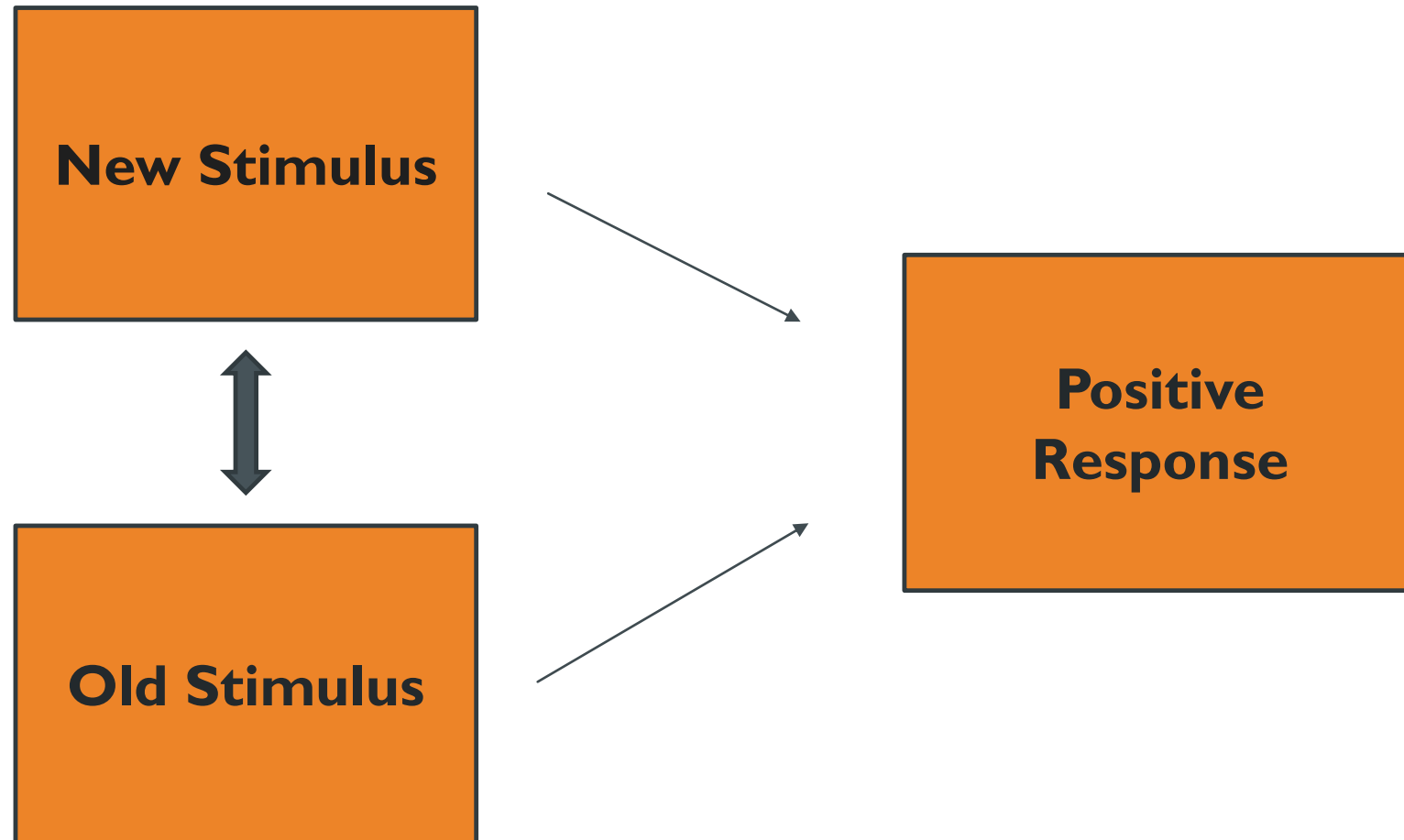
SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

- **Classical conditioning** = the process of using messages to pair a new concept with concepts that are already liked.

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

New Stimulus
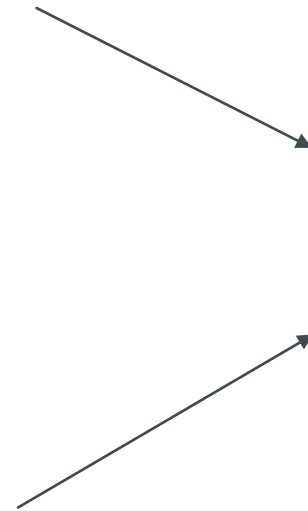
Old Stimulus

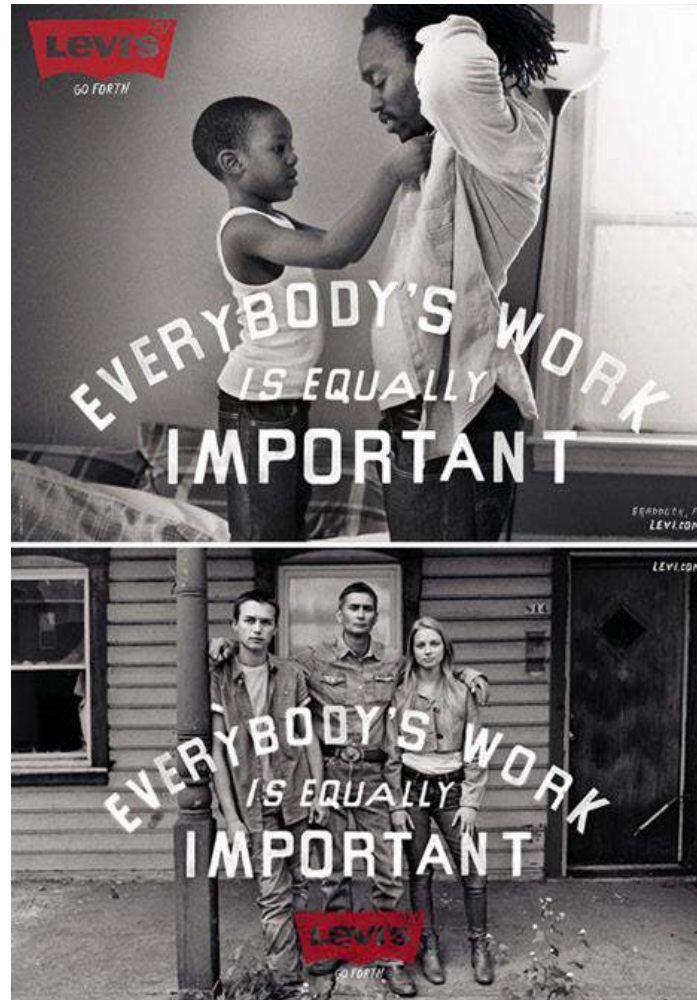**Positive Response**

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

Soda

Well-liked celebrity

Positive Response (Buy soda)

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING
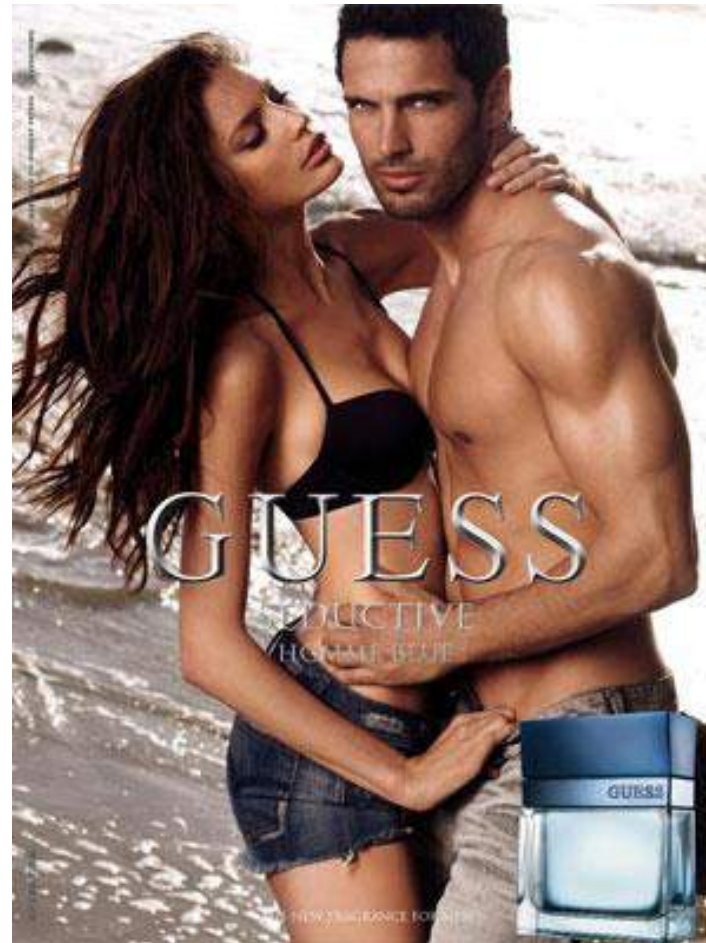
SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

- **Social judgment theory** = people do not evaluate an argument solely on the merits of what is said, but rather *compare the argument with what they already believe*

  - People evaluate persuasive statements to determine whether they fall into their **latitude of acceptance, their latitude of non-commitment,** or **their latitude of rejection.**

SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

- **Social judgment theory** posits that we all have a *continuum* of possible evaluations for any message we hear:

Social Judgment Latitudes		
Latitude of Acceptance	Latitude of Non-commitment	Latitude of Rejection

SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

- **Social judgment theory** posits that we all have a *continuum* of possible evaluations for any message we hear:

Social Judgment Latitudes		
Latitude of Acceptance	**Latitude of Non-commitment**	**Latitude of Rejection**
Arguments you agree with	**Arguments you do not have a strong view about yet**	**Arguments you believe are objectionable**

SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

Speakers should consider where listeners fall on the continuum

- Will listeners automatically reject the message?

- Are listeners so in favor that the message will not produce any meaningful attitude or behavior change?

SOCIAL JUDGMENT THEORY

- **Latitude of rejection:** the range of positions on a given issue that are <u>unacceptable</u> to the listener.

  - **For a college student with a lot of expenses, the claim that he/she should donate money to Relay for Life is most likely unacceptable.**

- **Latitude of acceptance:** the range of positions on a given issue that are acceptable to them.

  - **However, for the same college student, the claim that he/she should <u>participate</u> in Relay for Life is likely more acceptable.**

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

- **Cognitive dissonance theory** stresses that all people desire **consistency** in their thoughts, feelings, and actions
  - **Dissonance** is a feeling of **discomfort** caused by **inconsistency**

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

- **High dissonance** is likely to motivate attitude or behavioral change; people want to reduce discomfort and restore balance/consistency

- **Low dissonance** likely will not motivate a person toward change

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

- Persuaders attempt to **generate** **cognitive dissonance** in the message receiver in order to motivate them to change

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

- Persuaders attempt to **resolve** **cognitive dissonance** in the message receiver in order to motivate them to change

ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

- **Elaboration Likelihood Model** = a dual-processing model that explains both critical thinking internal responses AND responses based on mental shortcuts

ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL

- **Central route** = careful assessment and critical thinking of what is being said or presented
    - Typically how people evaluate and process messages about beliefs that are important to them

- **Peripheral route** = responding to persuasive messages with little critical thinking
    - Typically how people evaluate and process messages about less important beliefs

CIALDINI'S FIXED ACTION PATTERNS

- **Reciprocity** – when you do something for another person, they feel an obligation to help you.

- **Commitment & Consistency** – uses commitment to gain compliance with larger requests

- **Social Proof** – assuming that what our friends (people we like) view as correct is actually correct

- **Liking** – people who are well-liked often are more successful in their persuasive attempts

- **Authority** – outward signs of power and authority have positive effects on gaining compliance

- **Scarcity** – people are more easily persuaded when something is limited or they have little time to make up their minds

NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

- **How have social media and online networks impacted persuasion?**

NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

- **Going viral** – messages are diffused rapidly through online & offline networks
  - Most attempts to "go viral" fail

- **Factors:** content that is fun or shocking, a network of people who like the content, and links that make it easy to share
  - Positive content is more likely to go viral than negative content
  - Content that evokes intense emotions (shock/awe/anger)

NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE

- **Online social influence** = when one's emotions, opinions, or behaviors are influenced by other people or groups in online contexts

- **Influencers** = people who affect the spread of messages and influence other people more than others in the network

Kim Kardashian West
@KimKardashian
Follow

A 15 year old girl who is terminal w/ cancer has made a bucket list. 1 of her wishes is to trend on Twitter. Give a RT #alicebucketlist

12:56 AM - 27 Nov 2011

61,502 RETWEETS 571 FAVORITES