

QUOTATION

ROBERT B. CIALDINI ON EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES WITH ESTABLISHING OPERATIONS

The city of Mesa, Arizona, is a suburb in the Phoenix area where I live. Perhaps the most notable features of Mesa are its sizable Mormon population—next to that of Salt Lake City, the largest in the world—and a huge Mormon temple located on exquisitely kept grounds in the center of the city. Although I had appreciated the landscaping and architecture from a distance, I had never been interested enough in the temple to go inside until the day I read a newspaper article that told of a special inner sector of Mormon temples to which no one has access but faithful members of the Church. Even potential converts must not see it. There is one exception to the rule, however. For a few days immediately after a temple is newly constructed, nonmembers are allowed to tour the entire structure, including the otherwise restricted section.

The newspaper story reported that the Mesa temple had recently been refurbished and that the renovations had been extensive enough to classify it as “new” by Church standards. Thus, for the next several days only, non-Mormon visitors could see the temple area traditionally banned to them. I remember quite well the effect of the article on me: *I immediately resolved to take a tour.* But when I phoned a friend to ask if he wanted to come along, I came to understand something that changed my decision just as quickly.

After declining the invitation, my friend wondered why I seemed so intent on a visit. I was forced to admit that I had never been inclined toward the idea of a temple tour before, that I had no questions about the Mormon religion I wanted answered, that I had no general interest in the architecture of houses of worship, and that I expected to find nothing more spectacular or stirring than I might see at a number of other temples, churches, or cathedrals in the area. It became clear as I spoke that the special allure of the temple had a sole cause: If I did not experience the restricted sector shortly, I would never again have the chance. Something that, *on its own merits, held little appeal for me had become decidedly more attractive merely because it would soon become unavailable.*

Since that encounter with the scarcity principle—that opportunities seem more valuable to us when their availability is limited—I have begun to notice its influence over a whole range of my actions.

From: Cialdini, R. B. (1993). *Influence: The psychology of persuasion* (pp. 237–238). Quill: William Morrow and Company, Inc.

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