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DARLING

the art of being a woman



THE
SUBTLE
SWAY

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ion of two blondes stares back from a store mirror, one of whom rehen- sion plays on my face as I debate the merits of a buttery ket, estimated retail value approximately one month's mortgage bedroom house. I assess its tan lapels, the stiffness at the elbows. accounts, one of the most beautiful jackets in the world, and I sperately—something I've expressed to my friend, Victoria, who sponds, "Just work it. No harm in that." Victoria herself is excellent g it," a deftly effective persuader skilled at batting her eyelashes ing not-so-subtle hints about whatever it is that she wants, be nd or a free drink or discounted car insurance. She proceeds to with a few nifty tips on manipulating the friend of a friend of a owns this store into giving me the jacket for an extreme discount. me, and knows I will do no such thing, because I—warranted or —see poison in persuasion. I go home empty handed, never having red to ask. Victoria, on the other hand, coerced a 60 percent om the sales girl. "Your loss,"

think I have ever been a rsuasive person or, perhaps detrim- ent, an effectively ve one. I recall on very, very ions—so few I can count ne hand—when I blatantly to steer a particular n my favor. One such rare happened when I was ears old, when I purposely the monkey bars in eager n of the stir it would cause— ned teacher, the nurse with a lage, my parents getting me after school in consolation d running into my shoe, the dged in my skin. Attention of course, its own form of

. The scar on my knee that has never gone away, my punishment, e, naturally, more subtle forms of persuasion: getting the bank to oney for your small business despite your technical ineligibility, your friend with the car to give you a ride home even though ne way, negotiating failing grades with college professors so that actually graduate, a winning smile and inflationary fibs on a job o compensate for a weak resume. These are the benign efforts usasion's realm, and ones—I believe—that don't necessary hurt ethical gray area, let's call it. But harmless efforts can easily be armful effects, spearheaded by the likes of defense attorneys, y charming politicians, dictators, liars and altogether unsavory is is when the moral element of this particular act comes into and so it is imperative to find the balance, where ethics and can coexist healthfully, naturally.

Something about the idea of persuasion makes me nervous, at least left unchecked. It infers an undue shifting of odds into your favor, li synonymous with urging, influencing, moving. The act of persuadin like interfering with someone else's right to decide for themselves. though you've broken into their house in the middle of the night to shop in their kitchen, wearing a Cheshire cat grin while you bake t cake—a smoke and mirrors charade that makes them forget that y effectively a burglar, no matter what the purpose. "But look!" you "I've made you a cake!"

Sure, cake is great, burglar-baked or otherwise, but living your own without the influence of others, seems, at first glance, more satisfy take that away from someone could be criminal. There must be to meet persuasion halfway. Life, as we know, is not black and concessions must be made. And, after all, in the end, maybe they rea want this cake, maybe this cake is the most delicious cake in the wor they just didn't know it yet!

When executed in the right and for the right reasons, pers certainly has its positives. At it: persuasion is about getting wh want. A healthy amount of and self-importance is nec in life, especially in the wor an environment where jud persuasion can help your caree might, for instance, need to do friendly sleeve-tugging to func nonprofit. For that same p you may also want to convinc all-star employee currently w elsewhere to join your team. To persuasion entirely could leav vulnerable or left behind, totally whim of other people who are vocal about what they want an

go out and get it using all means necessary, persuasion likely being of anyone's well-stocked arsenal.

The trick is finding the gray area—a place where your ego allow to believe in things strongly, and fight for those beliefs, occasionally persuasion to get people onboard with your vision. It's important your goal, assess your motives, do some reconnaissance work. I about trivial manipulation, or winning just for winning's sake. I about swindling people out of retirement money or convincing a j someone's dubious innocence (or getting a leather jacket you ha business purchasing anyway). If you're going to be persuasive, it sho so earnest, so representative of a compelling issue—be it a well-de- raise, a political bill you believe in, or donations for your favorite cha that it stirs genuine ardor, that it becomes not the power of pers but the active truth of passion. When genuinely motivated, you can s what you want, while keeping your moral reserves well stocked.

AND SO IT IS IMPERATIVE TO FIND THE BALANCE, WHERE ETHICS AND PERSUASION CAN COEXIST HEALTHFULLY, NATURALLY.