PERSUASIVE TACTICS EXPOSED

Technology platforms employ persuasive techniques to keep our attention.
Understanding these tactics helps us fight back.

CREATING URGENCY

Notifications (vibrations, flashes, banners, dots) trigger our attention and are designed to pull us into the app, rather than provide important information.

Example: push notifications from news or social media apps

CONSTANT SEEKING

Social media capitalizes on our "wanting" desire to provide endless possibilities for seeking.

Example: infinite scroll on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or TikTok (more content loads automatically when you reach the bottom of the page)

FEAR OF MISSING OUT

The possibility of new likes/comments keep us compulsively checking for updates.

Example: notifications button keeps us coming back anticipating what we've missed.

RECIPROCITY BIAS

We have a tendency to reciprocate actions done toward us.

Example: When someone comments on your post or tags you, our reciprocity bias prompts us to return the action, keeping us on the platform.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

We have a tendency to search for information that proves our existing values and convictions. Algorithms play into this by showing you content aligned with your belief, which results in increased polarization.

Example: News feeds show articles based on your past engagement.

FOCUSING ON THE NEGATIVE

To keep us safe, our brains pay more attention to fearful, dangerous stimuli. Content that generates fear or anger spreads more quickly than positive content.

Example: Recommendation algorithms show more negative content, knowing it will spread faster and garner more attention.