

What sways you?

Today, on Thanksgiving Day, many people are sitting around plotting how to tackle “black Friday.” What stores should they visit? Whose gifts should they get? How early should they get there? And so forth.

Many of these folks are swayed by the promise of getting AMAZING! deals. Low low prices! Doorbusters! But are the deals worth the hassle? Hard to say.

The truth is that we can be swayed by many things. For instance, the reports about the TSA’s new invasive procedures. It was widely reported on TV, yet it seems that few if any people participated in Opt-Out day. At least that is what is being reported today. The Washington Post has yet another editorial supporting the TSA, and a front page article saying that very few people protested the TSA. Does that sway you?

A new movie opened yesterday starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway called Love & Other Drugs. The Washington Post gave it one and a half stars. Roger Ebert gave it three. Which review sways you? When you are deciding whether to spend \$10 plus, which reviewer will make you go to a movie or not?

My point is that we are swayed by opinions, news reporting, public relations and advertising but we are not always aware of what is making feel one way or another. These forces are powerful—they surround us and provide us information.

Oh and the force that seems to sway the most people is what their peers are doing. If everybody is going around using Foursquare, then we are too. And on this week of Thanksgiving there has been the often disingenuous need to express gratitude publicly. On Twitter, there’s a hashtag for that.

I am not against gratitude or expressing thanks. But if I do it, it is not because I am swayed because 400 people in my

Twitter stream are expressing all the blather they are thankful for.

What sways you this Thanksgiving and holiday season? Why do you do what you do?

Happy Thanksgiving to all, and thank you for reading.