



PYT Weekly Training & Support

Lesson #16 Defending Yourself Against Advertising

by Jim Katsoulis

Hello, welcome to this week's lesson. And what I want to talk about this week is advertising. It's estimated that we see over 3000 ads a day. Or I shouldn't say see; we're heaped with over 3000 ads a day: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. And the thing about that is it starts to skew our reality. It starts to create this quasi-reality because we know the ads aren't necessarily accurate, and we know that a lot times, they don't even make sense, and we'll talk about why that is in a moment.

But the two main areas I want to talk about in regards to advertising is how it portrays food and how they influence that and how it influences our own self image, how we think about ourselves and what we should be because advertising skews both of these things.

Now, the first thing is the food. If you watch most food advertisements at this point, you'll start to notice that, oftentimes, they don't even make sense. They're not even about the food, necessarily.

So, one of the examples is if you look at Olive Garden, it's really not about the food; they've really made it about this family environment. And so, if you go to Olive Garden, it's like having a huge, perfect Thanksgiving date dinner with your family. Everyone's there joking and having fun.

So, it's like it's overshadowed the food. Now, why is this? Because what has happened is, a lot of advertising has gone into just trying to be emotional. There was a time when advertisements would talk about the quality of the food, the ingredients, and why it tastes so good. And it shifted over into being emotional.

Now, why is this? Because it influences the unconscious mind very strongly. If you think about the unconscious mind, it doesn't think logically; it thinks through association. It's like Pavlov's dogs – ring the bell, put the food in front of them, and they start salivating at the same time. Eventually, you just have to ring the bell and it creates the same response because that was linked together in their mind.

The same thing with these ads; they show them over and over and over again, and it creates these associations. You see this right down the line with all these foods. Snickers candy bar really satisfies you. It gives you energy. Red Bull gives you energy. It gives you wings so you can do whatever you want.

And pretty much every food down the line is about the emotion of it – saving money, security, friendship, and excitement. If you look at Mountain Dew, it's all about the X

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Game people. So, they're gearing themselves towards that teenage audience and they're linking themselves. Mountain Dew is this adrenalin rush, and they've got it together.

So, what I want you to start to do is when you're watching these commercials, begin to think about them on that level. They're not trying to convince you logically. What they're trying to do is just create an emotional response in you and then attach it to their product.

Create the emotional response and link it to their product. That's what they're doing and they do it through these association techniques and through repetition, over and over and over and over again.

Another technique a lot of them use is the perception of authority. So, they'll have some doctor come out or someone who is respected for their authority level selling you the stuff, telling you a reason why you should get it, and why this one is better than that one. And, oftentimes, those studies are crap.

So, I just want you to recognize. Take a critical eye to these ads. I know that happened to me as I began learning ... there's a great book called *The Hidden Persuaders* by Vance Packard, and he wrote this ... I think it was in the '60s but it talked about the shift towards emotional marketing and using all these consumer tests to really influence people. And there's something profound that happens (I've noticed) working with a lot of people.

One thing that almost always makes a difference is when you could take a look behind the curtain and you could start to see what these companies are doing to really persuade you, unethically, to use their products. And we're just talking about the advertising aspect there. We're not talking about the sugar, the fat, and the salt that they put in the foods to make them addictive. We're just talking about the psychological advertisement part of it.

But the main one they're using is they're trying to elicit emotions in you that have nothing to do with their food. It's like Doublemint. This one sticks in my head. Doublemint commercials always have twins. They're having so much fun but they're chewing gum.

You know what I mean? I've chewed gum before. I've never had that much fun because of gum and I'm sure it's the same with you. So, it makes no sense logically. And most people say, "Well, I know it doesn't make sense logically; it's stupid." And so, they think it doesn't influence them, and that's the mistake a lot of people make.

I need you to recognize a deeper level of what this ad is trying to do. What emotion is it trying to make you feel? What emotions are they trying to get for you to attach to

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their food? Okay, because this feeds into the whole emotional eating thing we've talked about.

If you associate ... for example, going to Olive Garden makes you feel like you're with a family, but you're going by yourself or something. It's filling a void in a way that's an illusion; it's not real.

And so, the more you can see through that, I think it's very powerful. It, certainly, has helped me. As I look at these ads now, I'm constantly deconstructing them and I think that helps me avoid any temptation from them because I look them as a joke. So, that's one thing.

The other thing about those food advertisements as well is that they are ... this isn't probably a surprise to you, but a lot of times what you think you're looking at is food is not even food.

I forgot where I saw this but they took pictures of the food advertisements and then, they went out and got all those foods from the restaurants and the fast food places, and they compared them – completely different.

But what happens is, in your mind, you're imagining that food as you saw it on the ad because you've seen the ad hundreds of times maybe. And so, in your mind, you start thinking of it in that way so when you get the food that doesn't look anything like that, believe it or not, your mind is so powerful that it literally shades what you're seeing. And, visually, you'll pay less attention to what the food looks like and you'll just consume it without even really analyzing it.

So, another technique I want you to use when you get these foods and if you eat at these places is to look at them, smell them, really pay attention to them for just a moment, and get the reality picture clear in your mind, clearer than the advertisement picture.

So, it's very, very powerful because what's going to start to happen is you start to realize that you're being duped. If you eat these sorts of food and you relied on the advertising thing, then you start to realize that they're lying to you. You're being tricked and our brains don't like to be tricked like that. So, that's what I would suggest you do.

Now, the other thing is ... I don't think this is anything new but I just want to reinforce it. Just like they take food that isn't realistic, a lot of times, they're taking people that aren't realistic and situations that aren't realistic, and they're putting them up in these advertisements, and we start to think that that's how we should be, that's how our reality should be.

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But it's a skewed reality; it's not a reality. The example I use a lot is the photoshopped model; and they take this person who has been professionally made up with a professional hair and they're still not perfect. So, they photoshop them and it almost, at some point, goes from being a person to being a cartoon or a painting.

And yet, some people will look at that painting and say, "Oh, that's what I should look like. I should have bone structure like that. I should have lips like that." And they don't realize that all that stuff has been manipulated; it's not even real.

And it can make us feel bad. It can lower our self-esteem and our egos because [inaudible] **07:38** look like that and that's because no one can look like that. It's an illusion to a certain degree.

And so, we're constantly sold this dream ideal world that's not even possible but if in our minds we hold that, "That's what I want to look like; that's what I want to be like," and it's not even possible, it sets us up for guaranteed failure.

So, I want you to be aware of that. Start to look at these ads critically. I don't want you to become cynical or a critical person necessarily but you need to look at these ads and start to realize that they're not there for us; they're not there to make us feel good. They're there to trick us and to give up genuine family, genuine relationships in order to buy their food, very often.

I really don't like these ads; that's why I come out against them. I think they're very harmful, honestly. And I want you to start to see them for what they are. And as you do this, I think what you're going to find is that you step away from a lot of foods by doing this because a lot of these foods rely on trickery to get people to eat them.

I believe if McDonald's never had any advertisements and there's just that food in front of you, I don't know if they would be as successful as they are now. If all they had to go on was the taste of their food and the quality of their food with no advertising, I don't know.

So, I want you to experiment with this because this can be one of the most powerful things you can do psychologically, and it can really protect you from a lot of the crap that we're constantly bombarded with not even just in eating but in a lot of areas in your life.

So, use this, notice it, watch these ads, and set dreams for yourself and goals for yourself that are real, that you really want to achieve and not made up, fantastical ones, and I'll talk to you next week.

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