

Ignore advertising

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Advertising tells you every day that you're too old, too poor, too unfashionable. Why? Because unhappiness sells. In this video, I explain how advertising is deliberately designed to make you feel inadequate—so you buy things you don't need, often with money you don't have. It's not about informing you. It's about controlling you. So, what can we do about it?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXYe2VbUSFo?si=HttJggc-ZInQYIIE>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=hjhqi-19211fb-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Advertising is intended to make you unhappy.

That is the one absolute certainty about every single product advert that is ever put out by anyone.

What they're trying to tell you in every single case is that your life is inadequate.

Of course, what they're also trying to tell you is that if only you had their product,

suddenly you would be amazing. Your life would be fulfilled. You would be happy. You would now be rich enough to face the world, or you'd be thin enough to feel great about yourself, or your hair would suddenly cease to be grey and you'd look young and virile again - adverts obviously targeted at me. And whatever else that they might be trying to promote, the message is the same. You are a failure without their product.

They sell you goods on the basis of the creation of self-doubt.

They're telling you, you're too old, you're too poor, you're too unfashionable. Your stuff is out of date. Your body is the wrong shape. You are falling behind the 'in crowd', and their product is the only way to seek salvation from all these crises that you are apparently facing, but which you weren't aware of until you saw this advert.

And the message is bombarded at you all the time. Every day, you will see thousands of these messages. Is it any surprise that this constant exposure to messages saying that we are worthless has a consequence? Mental Ill health is growing in this world and a great deal of it is I suspect, manufactured by these messages of inadequacy that the advertising industry is sending out all the time.

It is also trying to destroy our confidence. No wonder people are living with anxiety. They are delivering austerity for the soul dressed in luxury packaging.

Now, the fact is that the vast majority of the messages inside these adverts is not just harmful. They're also untrue.

They are promoting the idea that perfectly usable things should be thrown away, at cost to our environment.

They're creating the idea that there is social shame where there needn't be any.

And they are creating the idea that identity must be monetised and not expressed. We are taught to consume and not to be.

And I think every one of those ideas is really dangerous, particularly when they're coupled with something else, which is the debt trap that advertisers want to create.

A very large number of companies who are heavily involved in advertising consumer products are also promoting financial services products.

Nothing makes this more obvious than cars. Every single time you look at an advert for a car, there will be the small print about the lease deal or the finance deal, or whatever else it might be.

The fact is that most advertising wins in two ways.

Firstly. It sells you a product that you may not want or need, and about which you might

have great remorse once you've bought it.

And secondly, it guarantees that you are kept in debt as a consequence because you won't be able to afford to buy it. And they will, as a result, offer you a credit facility, a payday loan, a buy now, pay later deal, or whatever else it might be that means that they get their sale, and you are hooked up to a debt burden for some time to come. In fact, what they're selling you is happiness delayed and it may never come.

So we need to ask questions about how we can resist this if we are to be happy.

You can drive a 13-year-old car. They work. I've got one. There is no problem with it, because it still gets me from A to B perfectly well and doesn't cost a fortune to run. In other words, all that consumer advertising thrown at me to persuade me that I've got to buy the latest limousine is wasted because I know I don't need to replace this one until it's run out of road, quite literally. And that is the greenest thing I can do with it.

I wear black polo shirts every day when you see me on this channel, and it's deliberate. They're basic, they're simple, and the lack of variety is deliberate. I don't have to make a choice before I sit in front of this camera, and not making a choice makes my life easier. Advertising tries to make your life more complicated, and that's an act of resistance in its own right. I'm not.

And quite a lot of my other possessions are quite old, including a fair number of those books that are sitting behind me. Some of those date from the 1970s, but they're still more than good enough.

In other words, what I'm saying is if you decide to do so, you can opt out of the madness that the advertising world wants to create for you. You don't need to buy a new phone every time one is advertised, because, let's be candid about this, you didn't use 90% of the facilities on the last one. The new model is just about making a sales pitch, but it's not about meeting a need, and in particular, it's very unlikely to meet a need that you had. That's one of the lessons you learn when you spend a lot of time with technology, as we now invariably have to.

Function matters more than fashion is my point. Just look at what you really need, not what the fashion of the day says you need.

And fashion in particular is a good example of this, because fashion is supposedly you 'keeping in', but in fact, fashion strips you of your personality and does not let you express your personality. It's all about being uniform instead of standing out from the crowd.

You are not the problem. The ad most definitely is in the case of those types of products, where you are being encouraged to be 'normal'.

So you don't need to be compliant. You can not conform.

And what advertising never says is that old things can work, and that debt can be misery, and that difference is beautiful, and that happiness can't be bought.

You have a right to be happy.

You have a right to be different.

You have a right to live without shame.

And advertisers hate the fact that you might know that because they lose money when you feel good.

And that's the point I'm trying to make.

Advertisers try to make you unhappy.

You have the right to ignore them and to make your own choices and to say, "I'll live the way I want, not the way that you dictate."

Having said all that, I'm really interested to know what you think.

Is advertising harmful?

Does it negatively impact on your life?

Or do you think it's useful because it tells you what's available in the marketplace?

We've put a poll down below. Let me know. Fill in the poll. Let us have your comments. We do read them even if we don't answer most because there are just too many to make that possible.

And, thank you.

Poll

[poll id="169"]