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By connecting the viewer to a product's message through humor or other emotional means, advertisers gain a unique opportunity for connection with their target market.

This commercial is funny because the likelihood of the premises being true is very low, but the chain of events is described as if it was inevitable. Charlie Sheen is also known for being a wild and crazy guy, and this adds to the humor. But does humor work? Does it make sense to mix logic and emotion in a television commercial? When does humor increase persuasion by making us feel good, and when does humor decrease persuasion by distracting us? What other types of emotions are important in advertising? These are the types of questions addressed in this chapter.

## OBJECTIVE

1

## An Overview of Motivation and Emotion

Motivation (needs or drives) and emotions (feelings or affective responses) encourage consumers to act. **Motivation** is a driving force that moves or incites us to act and is the underlying basis of all behavior. Individuals are driven to satisfy their needs, wants, and desires. **Emotion** (or *emotional* and *affective responses*) is a person's affect—feelings and moods—plus arousal.

Motivation and emotion are linked in a number of ways, which is why they are covered together in this chapter. Motivations and emotions are linked because consumers feel positive emotions when motivations are satisfied and negative emotions when motivations are not satisfied. Consumers also often describe motivations and emotions similarly, saying, "I feel like eating some Pizza Hut pizza," or "I feel like drinking Coca-Cola," or "I feel like reading my Consumer Behavior textbook," and so on. Furthermore, motivations and emotions focus attention and energize behavior. Motivations focus attention on goal-relevant objects, and emotions focus attention on emotional objects. This chapter examines how motivation and emotion influence consumer behavior by examining the process of motivation and several motivation and emotion theories.

### The Process of Motivation

What creates the driving force of motivation in a person? Motivation begins when a person feels a need that requires satisfaction. In general, **needs** are desires that arise when a consumer's current state does not match the

consumer's preferred state. Physiological needs, such as the need for air, water, food, sex, and protection from the environment (clothing and shelter), are *innate needs* or *primary needs*. Psychological needs are learned as we grow and are socialized, such as needs for affection, companionship, power, self-esteem, and intellectual stimulation. These are *secondary needs*. Needs should also be distinguished from *wants*. Although some people tend to use these two terms synonymously, there are differences. Needs are automatic and required; if you wake up at 2 A.M. "dying" of thirst, for instance, you need something to quench it. Wants are learned manifestations of our needs, e.g., only a glass of chocolate milk will take care of your 2 A.M. problem. Some marketers also distinguish between needs and wants by classifying wants as product-specific needs.



Craving chocolate milk is a product-specific need.

Needs are aroused via three routes: physiological, emotional, and cognitive. We have already touched on physiologically based needs. Physical changes in the body trigger need **arousal**. For example, your stomach growls when you haven't eaten in several hours; you shiver when your body temperature drops; and your eyes blur and feel scratchy when you are deprived of sleep. Emotions also lead to need arousal. For example, feeling bored or frustrated at work may lead to the need for a vacation; feeling lonely may lead to a need to go to a social event. Finally, arousal can come from our thoughts. Recalling the date of your mother's birthday may prompt a need to purchase and send her a gift. Cognitive arousal is tied closely to the environment because environmental situations and stimuli often trigger cognitive arousal. For example, seeing your roommate's new pair of running shoes may remind you of how old your own shoes are and trigger the need to shop.

Once a need is aroused, a state of tension is created that energizes a person to reduce or eliminate the need, returning to a preferred state, called the **goal** (or *goal-object*, *goal-state*). This tension is called a **drive**, and the degree or amount of tension influences the urgency with which actions are taken to return to the desired goal-state. Thus, motivation focuses attention on goals and drives us to act.

Motivations focus attention by producing a **valuation effect** and a **devaluation effect**.<sup>2</sup> When consumers are extremely hungry, they rate food products as more desirable (the valuation effect), and they rate nonfood products as less desirable (the devaluation effect). Similarly, when consumers are extremely thirsty, they rate beverages as more desirable (the valuation effect), and they rate non-beverages as less desirable (the devaluation effect). Surprisingly, hungry or thirsty consumers devalue money, even though money can be used to buy food or beverages. Furthermore, the devaluation effect is usually larger than the valuation effect, and these effects occur only when powerful motivations are present. For example, a famished consumer is motivated to attain one goal—to satisfy his hunger immediately. Thus, he will devalue any objects (including money) in an attempt to reduce hunger. This is one reason some consumers stand in line and pay exorbitant prices for food and beverages at amusement parks and sporting events. In this situation, they value food and beverages and devalue both time and money.



When faced with a desperate situation such as extreme thirst or hunger, consumers will sacrifice time and be willing to pay higher prices to satisfy that urgent need.

Motivations also influence the direction of behavior. Two directions are possible: **approach**, or movement toward a desired object or outcome, and **avoidance**, or movement away from an undesired object or outcome. For example, most consumers seek good entertainment; lack of such entertainment causes dissatisfaction. On the other hand, many consumers don't enjoy shopping in crowded retail environments and are likely to avoid shopping at peak times unless forced to do so. Motivations also influence what goals consumers pursue and how intensely and persistently consumers pursue these goals. In other words, our hobbies, interests, and needs influence what goals we pursue and how intensely and persistently we pursue these goals. Consumers who love collectible objects (e.g., wine, comic books, stamps, coins, works of

art) pursue these objects frequently (e.g., they search for these objects often), intensely (they search everywhere, including stores, flea markets, and the Internet), and persistently (they search for years).

## OBJECTIVE

## 2

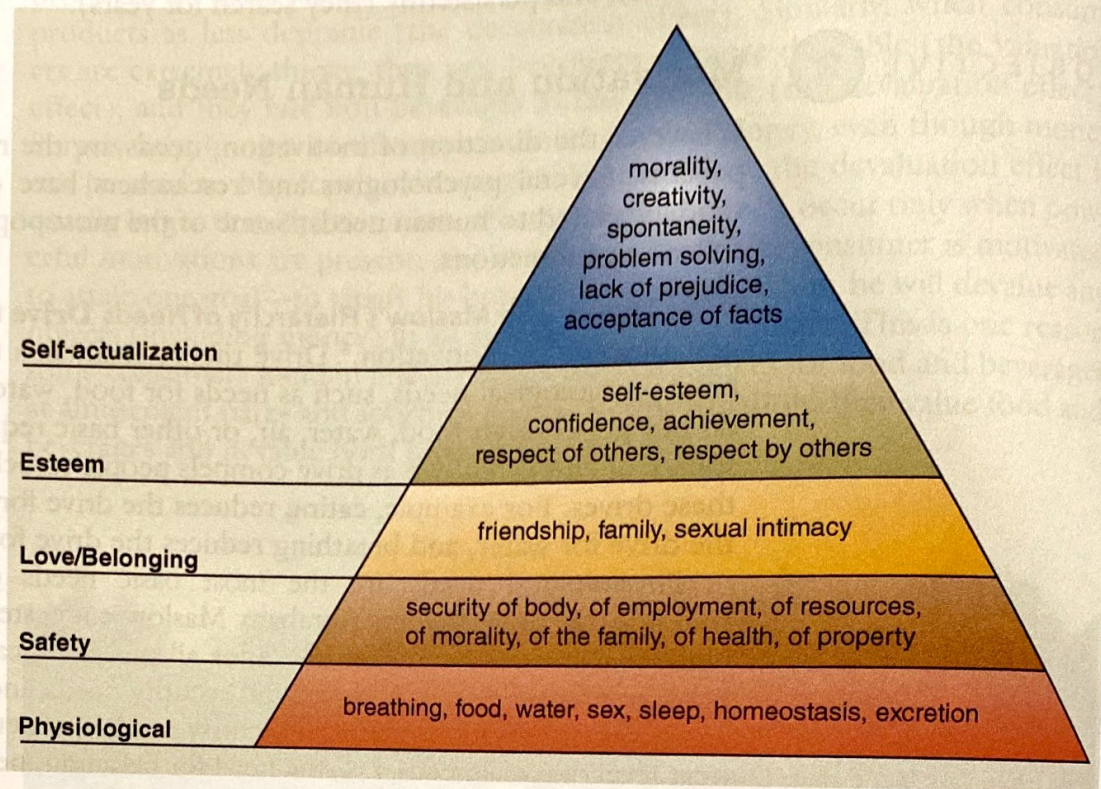
## Motivation and Human Needs

Whatever the direction of motivation, needs are the root of the motivational process. Several psychologists and researchers have developed theories and models related to human needs. Some of the most popular are reviewed in the following subsections.

**Drive Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs** **Drive theory** is one of the earliest theories of motivation.<sup>3</sup> Drive theory maintains that people have several basic physiological needs, such as needs for food, water, air, etc. When people do not get enough food, water, air, or other basic requirements for survival, a source of energy known as drive compels people to behave in ways that reduce these drives. For example, eating reduces the drive for food. Drinking reduces the drive for water, and breathing reduces the drive for air.

Physiological needs are the most basic needs experienced by people. Building on drive theory, Abraham Maslow suggested that people also have higher-order needs and desires.<sup>4</sup> After all physiological needs are met, people become preoccupied with safety and security needs, including needs for shelter and protection. Once safety and security needs are met, people move on to the next level of social needs, i.e., the need for belongingness and love. At this level, social relationships, affection, belonging, and choosing the right spouse become important. After these needs are met, people advance to the ego or esteem level. At this level, people need to feel competent and important. Finally, the highest level is self-actualization, which is the state of mind of people who feel that they have reached their full potential. Theoretically, relatively few people have reached this ultimate level. It should be noted that while each need is defined separately, overlap occurs among the categories. No need is ever completely satisfied, but a person cannot progress upward along Maslow's hierarchy until lower level needs are primarily satisfied. The full hierarchy is shown in Figure 7.1.

Marketers design clever promotions to appeal to all levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy. For instance, watch any late night television show, and you will see big, juicy hamburgers and hot, crispy fries floating across the screen to tempt late night cravings. Companies that market home security systems, insurance policies, and even clothing, promote safety and security needs. The Land's End clothing catalog has featured a story about how one of the brand's winter coats kept a person stranded in the wilderness alive. Products consumed in social groups in social gathering places, such as food and beverages, stress good friends, good times, and a feeling of belonging. eHarmony, an online dating service, emphasizes the importance of finding "that true soul mate," while in the 1980s AT&T encouraged you to "reach out and touch someone." Examples of esteem needs are everywhere from health and beauty ads to automobile ads. L'Oreal says that you're "worth it"; Lexus is for when "you've arrived"; Maybelline asks, "Maybe she's born with it?" Finally, self-actualization needs, while realized by relatively few, are certainly pursued, and marketers use

**FIGURE 7.1** | Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

these needs to help people reach for more. The U.S. Army and Air Force tap into this need with their slogans, "Be all that you can be," and "The sky's the limit." Gatorade asks, "Is it in you?" and Nike says, "Just Do It!"

**Self-Determination Theory** This theory builds on **Maslow's hierarchy of needs** by distinguishing between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.<sup>5</sup> Intrinsic motivation refers to the desire to pursue an activity or goal for its own sake, rather than for an extrinsic reward, such as money. Extrinsic motivation refers to the desire to pursue an activity or goal in order to receive a reward, such as money or praise. This distinction is important because people are usually more creative, hard-working, and more fulfilled and happy when they pursue intrinsic goals rather than extrinsic goals. According to self-determination theory, intrinsic motivation is highest when autonomy, belongingness, and competence (the ABCs of self-determination) are high. This means that intrinsic motivation is greater when people feel that they have free choice (i.e., they are not forced to do something), are part of an important group or organization, and feel that they are very good at what they do. For example, consumers who view themselves as knowledgeable about wines and have income adequate to purchase high quality wines are more likely to enjoy shopping for and consuming these products.

**The Trio of Needs** Some consumer researchers believe that Maslow's list of needs can be simplified to three key elements particularly important for consumer behavior. The need for *power* refers to the consumer's desire to control other people, objects (e.g., money), and the environment (e.g., one's home or work)



Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Some product advertisements appeal to the need for achievement.

because power increases the likelihood that the consumer can acquire the things he or she wants. The need for *affiliation* refers to the need for belongingness and friendship or the desire to be a member of a personally important social group. People with high affiliation needs are socially dependent and choose products they feel others will approve of. The need for *achievement* refers to the need to accomplish difficult tasks (e.g., completing a college degree, getting a high-paying job) and to be successful. After all, no one wants to be a “loser.” High achievement is a valuable promotional tool when targeting well-educated and affluent consumers.

So far, we have seen that consumers have many different motivations and needs. Some are physical (e.g., food, water, air) and some are emotional (e.g., belongingness). Next, let's switch gears and discuss cognitive needs. Cognition refers to purposeful thinking or information processing. Some types of thoughts and ideas “feel right” and make consumers feel at ease and comfortable. Others feel bad and make consumers feel awkward or uncomfortable. People have a need for cognitive consistency.<sup>6</sup>

Typically, consistent thoughts feel right, and inconsistent thoughts feel wrong. Three consistency theories provide explanations for consumers' need for consistency in their thinking: attitude function theory, balance theory, and cognitive dissonance theory.

## OBJECTIVE

3

**Attitude Function Theory** This theory describes four major types of attitudes.<sup>7</sup> Attitudes that serve the *knowledge function* summarize large amounts of information to simplify the world and help consumers make decisions. Attitudes that serve the *value-expressive function* communicate important beliefs to others and help consumers interact with each other more efficiently. Attitudes that serve the *ego-defensive function* help consumers feel safe and secure and good about themselves. Finally, attitudes that serve the *adjustment function* help consumers approach pleasure and avoid pain more quickly and efficiently. Persuasive messages that are positive and consistent with the underlying function of a consumer's attitude are more likely to feel right and be effective. On the other hand, persuasive messages that are inconsistent with an attitude function are more likely to be ignored. Thus, it is critical for marketers to understand which functions consumers draw on when evaluating their products.

Different persuasion techniques are needed for different attitude functions. Information and facts are useful for changing attitudes that serve the **knowledge function**, but not for changing attitudes that serve other functions. Image appeals are useful for changing attitudes that serve the **value-expressive function**. Authority and fear appeals are useful for changing attitudes that serve the **ego-defensive function**. Finally, hedonic (or pleasure/pain) appeals are useful for changing attitudes that serve the **adjustment function**. Should anyone doubt the power of attitude functions, observe someone trying to change another person's religious attitudes (which serve the ego-defensive function) with facts (which serve the knowledge function). Similarly, try

changing someone's attitudes about a favorite guilty pleasure such as smoking (which serves the adjustment function) with imagery such as yellow teeth (which serves the value-expressive function).

Understanding a consumer's regulatory focus is also important. **Regulatory focus theory** suggests that consumers regulate or control their behavior by using either a **promotion focus** or a **prevention focus**.<sup>8</sup> A promotion focus is concerned with the presence or absence of positive outcomes and with aspirations and accomplishment. A prevention focus is concerned with the presence or absence of negative outcomes and with protection and responsibilities. Some consumers are usually more promotion-focused, while others tend to be more prevention-focused. Messages that encourage consumers to think about their aspirations and accomplishments foster a promotion focus. Messages that encourage consumers to think about protection and responsibilities foster a prevention focus.

Combining attitude function theory and regulatory focus theory results in a  $4 \times 2$  matrix of persuasion techniques.<sup>9</sup> For maximum effectiveness, persuasive messages must match consumers' attitude functions and regulatory focus. Figure 7.2 lists major persuasive message types and the conditions under which each is most effective.

**FIGURE 7.2** | Types of Advertisements and the Conditions Under Which Each Will Be Most Effective

Attitude Function	Promotion-Focused Ads	Prevention-Focused Ads
Knowledge	Factual appeals Logical arguments Comparative advertising	Mystery ads Surprise Confusion
Value expression	Image appeals Celebrity advertising	Nerd alert ads
Ego defense	Authority figures Experts	Fear appeals
Adjustment	Pleasure	Pain

SOURCE: Adapted from Kardes & Cronley (2000).

For example, many ads for personal computers and other high-tech products provide information about brand attributes and benefits to inform consumers about these complex products. Usually, consumers need to be at least somewhat knowledgeable about these products to make sense of the information. Rather than try to inform consumers, prevention-focused knowledge appeals attempt to confuse consumers by using unfamiliar technical information or surprising and unexpected information that leads consumers to rethink their attitudes. Mystery ads, or ads that do not reveal what is being advertised until the end of the message, can also encourage consumers to think more diligently about their attitudes.<sup>10</sup> Many dot.com companies use this approach, as did early ads for the Infiniti automobile.



Clynt Garnham Lifestyle/Alamy



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Promotion-focused value-expressive appeals.

Promotion-focused ego-defensive appeal.

Promotion-focused, ego-defensive appeals use authority figures (e.g., political leaders, religious leaders, police officers) or experts (e.g., doctors, lawyers, executives) to convince consumers to change their attitudes about products and services that offer protection against accidents (e.g., insurance), theft (e.g., home and car security systems), and other uncertain, negative events. Such appeals are particularly useful for influencing political attitudes. Stereotypes, or negative attitudes toward specific groups, also serve an ego-defensive function by helping people feel better when they compare themselves to a group they perceive as inferior.

Adjustment appeals focus on simple hedonism, or the pleasure/pain principle. Consumers buy some types of products simply because they taste good (e.g., ice cream, candy, and other unhealthy but tasty foods and beverages) or feel good (e.g., alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes). In the same vein, consumers avoid some types of products because they taste bad (e.g., mouthwash, fiber cereals), or feel bad (e.g., pharmaceuticals that improve one's health despite aversive side effects, such as blood pressure medicines). Promotion-focused adjustment appeals focus on the benefits of guilty pleasures, such as high-calorie foods and beverages and entertainment products that no one wants to admit they like (e.g., movies such as *Dumb and Dumber* and gossip magazines). Facts and figures do not promote such products effectively (e.g., statistics do not convince consumers to quit smoking). Neither does image, because many guilty pleasures are consumed privately rather than publicly. Ego-defensive appeals are similarly ineffective because people like what they like, no matter what authorities or experts think.

Prevention-focused adjustment appeals are particularly useful for products that help consumers avoid pain, such as pain relievers (e.g., aspirin, acetaminophen, antacids, seltzers, laxatives, ointments). A recent ad for Excedrin, for example, shows an actor saying he does not know why or care how the product works,

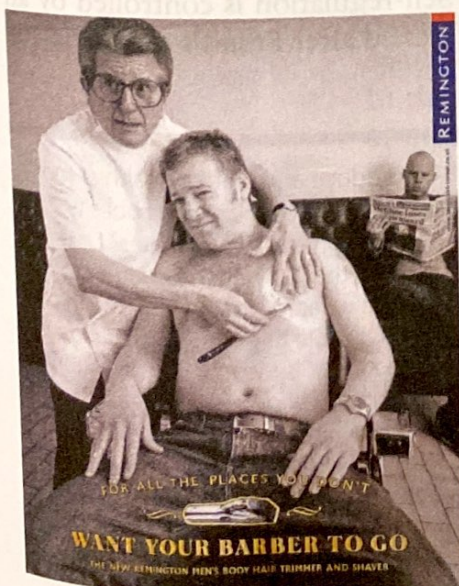


Image Courtesy of The Advertising Archives

Prevention-focused ego-defensive appeal.



## Global Perspectives

### Culture and Regulatory Focus

Most of the research published in leading scientific consumer behavior journals reports the results of experiments conducted in the United States. Of course, the United States is a western culture dominated by people with an independent self-view (Canada and Western Europe are similar in this outlook). This means that western consumers are primarily interested in maximizing their own outcomes and are not always concerned about what happens to other people. By contrast, in eastern cultures, such as those of Japan, China, and Eastern Europe, people have a more interdependent self-view. This means that these consumers are primarily interested in maximizing the outcomes of important groups in their lives, such as their families, friends, and co-workers.

Recent research on culture and regulatory focus shows that consumers with independent self-views often adopt a promotion focus.<sup>11</sup> These consumers are therefore more sensitive and responsive to promotion-focused ads because these ads match their promotion-focused regulatory orientation. By contrast, consumers with interdependent self-views often adopt a prevention focus. These consumers are more sensitive and responsive to prevention-focused ads because these ads match their prevention-focused regulatory orientation. Hence, cultural backgrounds have a powerful influence on regulatory focus, and regulatory focus in turn has a powerful influence on the relative effectiveness of promotion- versus prevention-focused advertisements.

it just works. In other words, no complex arguments, celebrities or experts are needed. Consumers want a product that eliminates headaches, and they don't care how or why the product works.

**Self-Regulation** Consumers often have admirable goals (such as avoiding unhealthy foods, exercising more, watching less mindless television, drinking less alcohol, quitting smoking, and quitting other bad habits) that they fail to reach due to problems with **self-regulation**, or self-control or willpower.<sup>12</sup> Self-regulation is necessary for making good decisions and avoiding bad ones—such as overeating, overspending, impulsive buying, compulsive spending, and making decisions that one will later regret. Self-regulation is controlled by an inner psychological resource called the *ego* (named after Freud's *ego*), and the



### Ethics

Approximately 25% of the population of the United States is clinically obese. Obesity is a huge (pardon the pun) social problem because of the health risks associated with it, including increased risk for heart attacks, diabetes, and other health problems.

Of course, fast food restaurants, such as McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's, are very popular in the United States, and this popularity very likely contributes to the obesity problem. Recently, some morbidly obese U.S. consumers have brought lawsuits against McDonald's based on the fact that much of McDonald's food is very fattening and unhealthy and is therefore a major cause of the plaintiffs' obesity problems. The plaintiffs claim that McDonald's is slowly killing them. Does McDonald's have a moral responsibility

to produce and market healthier food to help reduce the serious obesity problem in the United States? Or is it up to the individual consumer to decide what foods and how much of it is reasonable to consume? What do you think? What is the role of motivational psychological processes in wanting to eat unhealthy food in large quantities? Can individual consumers be expected to control the physiological and motivational processes that regulate their urge to eat?

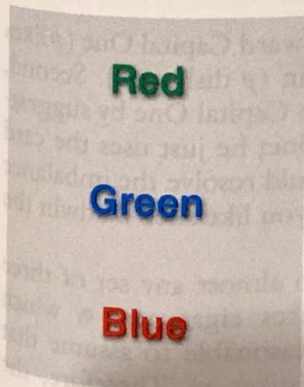
ing increased risk for heart attacks, diabetes, and other health problems.

availability of this resource at any particular time depends on several important psychological variables.

For example, imagine that you had to choose between a delicious looking slice of chocolate cake versus a healthy but less appetizing fruit salad. What would you do in this situation? If you choose with your heart and focus on your feelings, you will be more likely to choose the chocolate cake. However, if you choose with your head and focus on making a healthy choice, you will be more likely to choose the fruit salad. This experiment was actually conducted and the results showed that when consumers had unlimited time and energy for thinking about this problem, they were more likely to choose the healthy fruit salad.<sup>13</sup> However, if they were distracted and asked to memorize a string of numbers while performing this choice task, they were more likely to focus on feelings and choose the unhealthy chocolate cake.

Depleting or using up cognitive resources during a choice task often results in poorer choice decisions. However, depleting resources for one task can also leave fewer resources for subsequent tasks. In a classic demonstration of **ego depletion**, participants entered a lab filled with the wonderful aroma of fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies.<sup>14</sup> In the control condition, participants got to taste these cookies and rate them. However, in the experimental condition, participants were asked to taste and rate radishes. Next, all participants were asked to solve unsolvable anagrams, and the amount of time participants spent on this task served as the major dependent variable. The results showed that participants gave up sooner in the radish condition than in the cookie condition. Eating radishes while smelling chocolate chip cookies uses up **self-regulatory** resources, leaving fewer resources for follow-up tasks. It should be noted that this carry-over effect was not influenced by mood or by mental or physical fatigue. Instead, when one task depletes self-regulatory resources, people perform more poorly on subsequent tasks that require self-regulation or restraint.

Any task that uses up self-regulatory resources leaves fewer resources for tasks that come later. Ego depleting tasks come in many forms, and the radish task is just one example. Similar results were observed when self-regulatory resources were depleted by a complicated proofreading task. In the control condition, participants were asked to cross out every "e" in one page of text. In the experimental condition, participants were asked to cross out every "e" in one page of text except for those that preceded or followed a vowel. This type of task takes restraint because the first impulse is to cross out every "e," and not crossing out some of them uses up willpower. Similar results were also observed when participants performed a **Stroop task**, or a color naming task in which color words were printed in different colors. For example, the word "green" could be printed in the color red. In the control condition, participants were asked to name the color word and to try to ignore the color that the word is printed in. In the experimental condition, participants were asked to name the color that the word is printed in and to try to ignore the color word. The latter task is much more difficult and requires greater willpower, because the first impulse is to name the color word. Whenever ego depletion occurs, however, people perform more poorly on subsequent tasks. Ego depletion has been shown to lead to poorer consumer choice decisions in many different settings. In other words, ego depletion leads consumers to make a wide variety of gut decisions that rely on intuitions and feelings, rather



A Stroop task can lead to ego depletion which in turn can lead to poor consumer decisions.

than deliberative decisions that require making difficult trade-offs among attributes.<sup>15</sup> This occurs because gut decisions are quick and easy, and they do not require self-regulatory resources. Trade-off decisions, however, are slow and difficult, and they cannot be made without self-regulatory resources.

#### OBJECTIVE 4

**Balance Theory** This theory focuses on the degree of consistency among three elements:

- $p$ , the person or consumer who receives a persuasive message
- $o$ , the other person (e.g., a friend, salesperson, or spokesperson) who recommends a particular product or service
- $x$ , a stimulus such as a particular product or service<sup>16</sup>

Balance exists when the relationships among all three elements are positive (e.g.,  $p$  likes  $o$ ;  $o$  likes  $x$ ; therefore,  $p$  should like  $x$ ) or if two relations are negative and one is positive (e.g., my enemy's enemy is my friend). Balanced relationships are learned more quickly, are more memorable, and are rated as more pleasant. Consumers like balanced triads. However, the converse is also true. Consumers do not like imbalanced triads, where all three relations among the elements are negative (e.g.,  $p$  dislikes  $o$ ,  $o$  dislikes  $x$ , and  $p$  dislikes  $x$ ) or two relations are positive and one is negative (e.g.,  $p$  likes  $o$ ,  $o$  likes  $x$ , and  $p$  dislikes  $x$ ). Imbalanced triads produce unpleasant tension, and consumers are motivated to reduce this tension by changing one (or more) of the perceived relations within the  $p$ - $o$ - $x$  triad.

Let's look at an example. A recent Capital One Venture Card commercial shows actor Alec Baldwin endorsing the card while making fun of airlines by saying you should always turn off your electronic devices during takeoff and landing, even though he recently refused to do this in real life. If  $p$  is you,  $o$  is Alec Baldwin, and  $x$  is Capital One, imbalance exists if you like Baldwin ( $p$  likes  $o$ ), Baldwin uses Capital One ( $o$  likes  $x$ ), and you dislike Capital One ( $p$  dislikes  $x$ ). There are three ways that you can bring about balance to this triad:

1. Change your attitude.
2. Deny the relationship.
3. Differentiate the relationships.

First, you could change your attitude toward Capital One ( $p$  likes  $x$ ) or change your attitude toward Baldwin ( $p$  dislikes  $o$ ). Second, you could deny Baldwin's relationship with Capital One by suggesting that he doesn't really prefer Capital One; he just uses the card to gain huge endorsements. Third, you could resolve the imbalance through differentiation by indicating that you like Alec Baldwin the actor, but not Alec Baldwin the celebrity.

This type of analysis can be applied to almost any set of three elements. For example, consumer,  $p$ , likes cigarettes,  $o$ , which are linked to heart disease,  $x$ . It seems reasonable to assume that the consumer dislikes heart disease ( $p$  dislikes  $x$ ). Therefore, the consumer must resolve the imbalance through attitude change (e.g., disliking cigarettes and thus quit smoking), denial (e.g., cigarettes

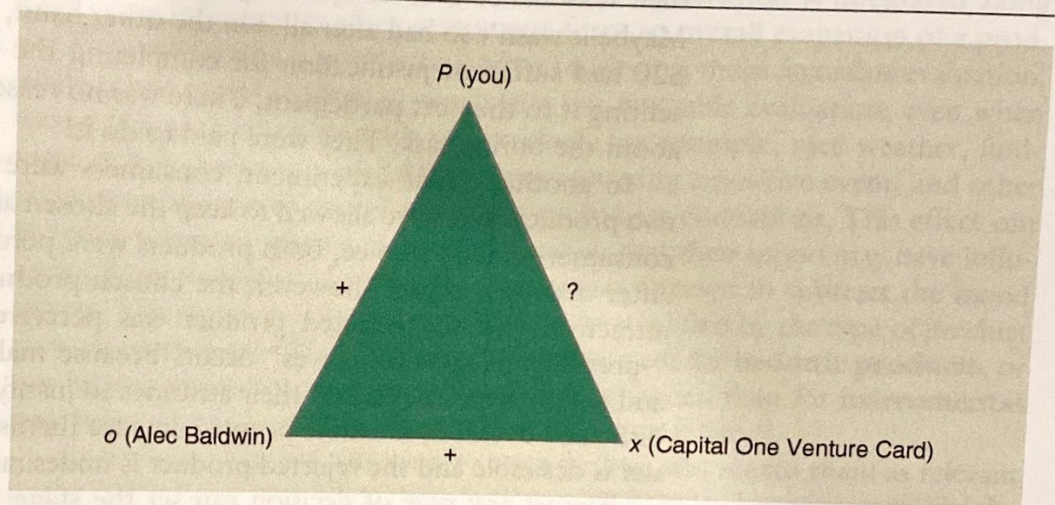


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If you like Alec Baldwin but not necessarily the company Capital One, an advertisement with Baldwin endorsing Capital One's credit card may lead you to shift your attitudes toward the company and perhaps become a new customer for them.

do not cause heart disease), or differentiation (e.g., the consumer likes the way cigarettes make him feel but dislikes the long-term side effects). Many ads feature a likable celebrity,  $o$ , endorsing a new product,  $x$ . If the consumer,  $p$ , likes  $o$ , and if  $o$  likes  $x$ , subtle pressure toward consistency induces the consumer to form a favorable attitude toward  $x$  so that the triad is in balance. It's easy to see how balance theory explains why celebrity advertising can be highly effective (see Figure 7.3).

**FIGURE 7.3** | Balance Theory



**Cognitive Dissonance Theory** Most people assume that attitudes influence behavior, but **cognitive dissonance theory** suggests the reverse: behavior can also influence attitudes. According to cognitive dissonance theory, consumers strive for consonance, or consistency between a specific behavior and an attitude related to that behavior. Dissonance, or behavior-attitude inconsistency, produces an unpleasant tension, referred to as dissonance arousal. When it occurs, people are motivated to reduce the dissonance by changing their attitude to match the behavior that was performed. The shift in attitude that increases behavior-attitude consistency is known as the dissonance effect. It often involves effort justification, or attempts to rationalize the initially undesirable behavior. Sometimes people are persuaded to do things that they really don't want to do. For example, parents talk children into cleaning their rooms, professors talk students into doing their homework, and bosses talk employees into doing their jobs. As the amount of effort involved in performing a disliked activity increases, the more people change their attitudes to convince themselves that the effort was worthwhile. This attitude change then leads to future behavior change.

In a classic experiment, college students were asked to perform a senseless and boring task: to turn a series of pegs on a pegboard one quarter of a turn.<sup>17</sup> After turning each peg, they were asked to return the peg to its beginning point and repeat the task. This continued for about a half hour. In the high-dissonance condition, each subject was asked to tell the next participant that the task was "exciting and fun." These students received \$1 for performing the

task and describing it as “fun” to the next participant. In the low-dissonance condition, a separate group of students received \$20 for performing the task and telling the next participant that it was “fun.” Which group do you think rated the task more favorably, the group who received \$1 or the group who received \$20? At first glance, one might think the low-dissonance group (those who received \$20) rated the task more favorably because they were happy to receive \$20. But the opposite was true. Students in the high-dissonance condition (those who received only \$1) rated the task more favorably.

Why? Describing the task as “fun” when they knew it was boring is inconsistent, and \$1 is insufficient justification for lying. Thus, they had to reduce their dissonance arousal by changing their attitudes toward the boring task. Maybe it wasn’t so bad after all. On the other hand, the students who received \$20 had sufficient justification for completing the boring task and misrepresenting it to the next participant. There was no reason to change their attitude about the boring task. They were paid to do it!

In another classic experiment, consumers were asked to choose between two products and were allowed to keep the chosen alternative as a gift.<sup>18</sup> Before consumers made a choice, both products were perceived as equally attractive. After making a choice, however, the chosen product was perceived as highly attractive, and the rejected product was perceived as less attractive. This “spreading of the alternatives” occurs because making a decision is difficult, and people need to readjust their attitudes to justify their decisions. The more difficult a decision, the more people convince themselves that the chosen product is desirable and the rejected product is undesirable.

Almost any type of decision can set the stage for dissonance effects. For example, suppose a consumer makes a bad decision and buys a product that performs poorly. This behavior is likely to produce dissonance arousal because the behavior is inconsistent with the belief or desire to make good purchase decisions. Post-purchase dissonance is especially likely when the decision

- is important.
- involves giving up positive features of a rejected alternative or accepting negative features of a chosen alternative.
- involves alternatives that are similar in terms of overall desirability.

Making purchase decisions is not the only difficult activity that people perform. Joining a fraternity or sorority, getting into college, getting a job, landing a sale, and losing weight are also difficult activities. Research has shown that the more difficult the activity is (e.g., hazing, interviewing, negotiating), the more people value their fraternities, sororities, universities, jobs, clients, and health clubs. Consequently, people are more likely to remain loyal members of these establishments for longer periods of time.

## Emotion

The previous sections in this chapter have described how motivations focus attention and influence a wide variety of consumer behaviors. We will now show how feelings and emotions also focus attention and influence consumer behavior. Even very simple feelings, such as **positive affect** or positive mood,

can have surprisingly powerful and complex effects on behavior. Little things—like nice weather, finding a dollar on the sidewalk, receiving a small gift or a compliment, remembering a positive event, and so on—can induce positive affect. When people are in a good mood, they are more helpful, more creative, and more willing to try new products.<sup>19</sup> Positive affect also helps consumers make better and more satisfying purchase decisions.

### Feelings-as-Information Theory

This theory suggests that mood and other types of feelings are often treated like any other piece of information, and this information is integrated along with other information when consumers form an overall evaluation of a product.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, a good mood often results in a more favorable evaluation, while a bad mood is likely to result in a less favorable evaluation, even when mood has nothing to do with the product. For example, nice weather, finding a dollar, receiving a compliment, remembering a positive event, and other extraneous sources of mood can enhance product evaluations. This effect can backfire, however, when consumers recognize that their mood may have influenced their evaluation. In this case, consumers attempt to subtract the mood effects. The mood-as-information effect is also qualified by the type of product consumers evaluate. The effect is more pronounced for **hedonic products**, or products consumers use to enjoy positive experiences, than for **instrumental products**, or products consumers use to solve a problem.<sup>21</sup>

Consumers often pay attention to their feelings and regard them as relevant to the task at hand, even when these feelings stem from irrelevant sources, like the weather or other incidental mood-altering sources.<sup>22</sup> When consumers realize that their feelings were influenced by irrelevant sources, however, they discount the informational value of their feelings and try to ignore them. Usually, however, feelings are perceived as relevant and the influence of feelings on judgment and choice increases with perceived relevance. Inferences about feelings depend on consumers' naïve theories about the meaning of these feelings. For example, consumers often assume that thinking about favorable products puts them in a good mood, so if they are in a good mood, the product they are thinking about is likely to be a good product. Other types of feelings are also important. For example, consumers often assume that feelings of fluency or ease imply that the information they are reading is valid and informative, and that judgments that spring to mind quickly and easily are also likely to be valid and informative. Consequently, consumers tend to be overconfident when information seems familiar or easy to read or when judgments are formed quickly and easily.

When it is easy to think of reasons for liking a product, consumers often infer that there must be many reasons for liking the product. Conversely, when it is difficult to think of reasons for liking a product, consumers often infer that there must be few reasons for liking the product. For example, consumers often form more favorable overall evaluations of a BMW after generating one reason for liking the BMW than after generating ten reasons for liking the BMW!<sup>23</sup> Generating one reason seems easy and this suggests that there are many reasons for liking the BMW. Generating ten reasons seems like a lot of work, and this suggests that there are few reasons for liking the BMW even though ten reasons were just generated.

Other types of feelings are also important. Feelings such as bodily sensations have also been shown to influence consumer judgment and choice. Reading information or forming judgments while smiling or nodding often leads to greater perceptions of validity and more favorable judgments. The opposite has also been observed: reading information or forming judgments while frowning or shaking one's head "no" often leads to lower perceptions of validity and less favorable judgments. Using cleansing products can also change people's feelings. For example, after telling a lie, people often feel guilty. However, using an appropriate cleansing product can make people feel less guilty. When people lie with their hands by sending a lie via e-mail, they feel less guilty after washing their hands with hand sanitizer. When people lie with their mouths by delivering a lie via voicemail, they feel less guilty after washing their mouths with mouthwash.<sup>24</sup>

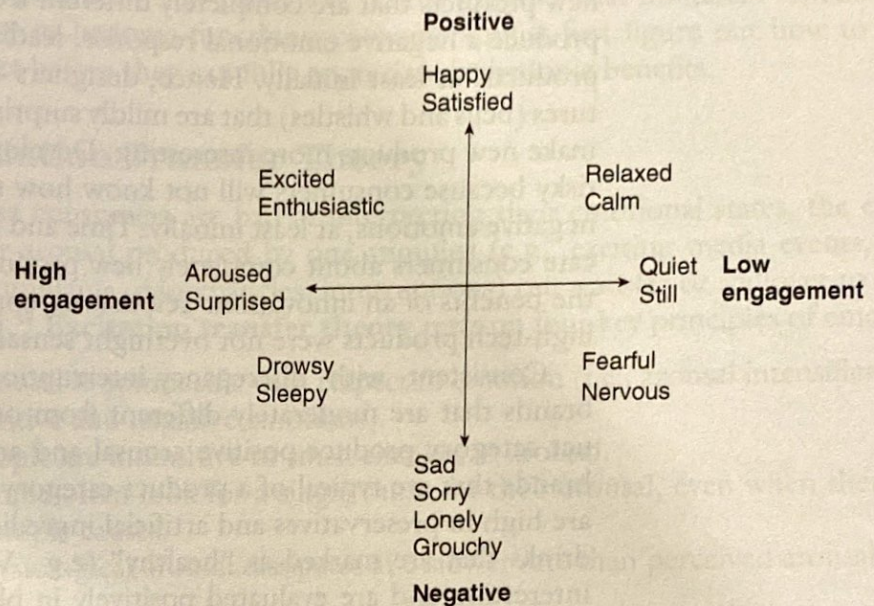
Feelings can also influence how other types of information are processed.<sup>25</sup> When people feel nervous, irritable, or sad, they sometimes infer that their judgments are incorrect, and this leads them to search for more information and think about this information more carefully to avoid forming incorrect judgments. When people feel content, happy, or confident, they sometimes infer that their judgments are correct, and this can lead to reduced information search and a greater reliance on categorical knowledge.

### Affect Confirmation Theory

This theory suggests that affect or mood can also influence how consumers use product attribute information.<sup>26</sup> Instead of a direct input for judgment, as the mood-as-information model suggests, mood can alter the weighting of product attribute information. When consumers are in a good mood, positive attributes tend to be weighted more heavily. When consumers are in a bad mood, negative attributes tend to be weighted more heavily. For example, a consumer who is in a good mood may consider a positive feature of Polo Ralph Lauren clothing (e.g., prestige) more important than when he is in a bad mood. Alternatively, a consumer who is in a bad mood may think more about a negative feature of Polo (e.g., expensive). Hence, mood can have many different effects on consumer judgment.

Affective experiences or feelings are intensified when they are accompanied by physiological arousal or excitation of the sympathetic nervous system. As stated previously, emotion is defined as intense affect or affect plus physiological arousal. Emotion is more specific than affect because it reflects an appraisal process (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger, fear).<sup>27</sup> Exciting events like action movies, major sporting events, and intense interpersonal interactions produce emotion. Exercise also increases physiological arousal levels and can produce emotion. Chemicals, such as caffeine, adrenalin, norepinephrine (synthetic adrenalin), and other stimulants also produce emotion. Figure 7.4 illustrates the vast array of emotions.

Although people are good at detecting changes in their arousal levels, they are often surprisingly bad at interpreting their own emotions. For example, in a classic study, people were injected with norepinephrine (which produces arousal) and were asked to stay in a waiting room for the next phase of the experiment.<sup>28</sup> Another person was also waiting there. Although this person seemed like another participant in the experiment, he was actually an accomplice of the experimenter. In "happy" conditions, the accomplice seemed to be

**FIGURE 7.4** | Types of Affect and Emotion

SOURCE: Watson, D., and Tellegen, A. (1985). Toward a Consensual Structure of Mood. *Psychological Bulletin*, 93:219–235.

overjoyed: he smiled a lot and threw paper airplanes. In “angry” conditions, the accomplice seemed to be annoyed and mad: he frowned a lot and complained about having to wait for so long. During the next phase of the experiment, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire asking them about their current emotional states. Participants who received norepinephrine and saw the happy accomplice perceived themselves to be happy. Participants who received norepinephrine and saw the angry accomplice perceived themselves to be angry, just like him. In other words, people used the accomplice’s behavior as a contextual cue to help them interpret their own emotions. In general, studies like this have found that people are bad at interpreting their own emotions without the help of such contextual cues.

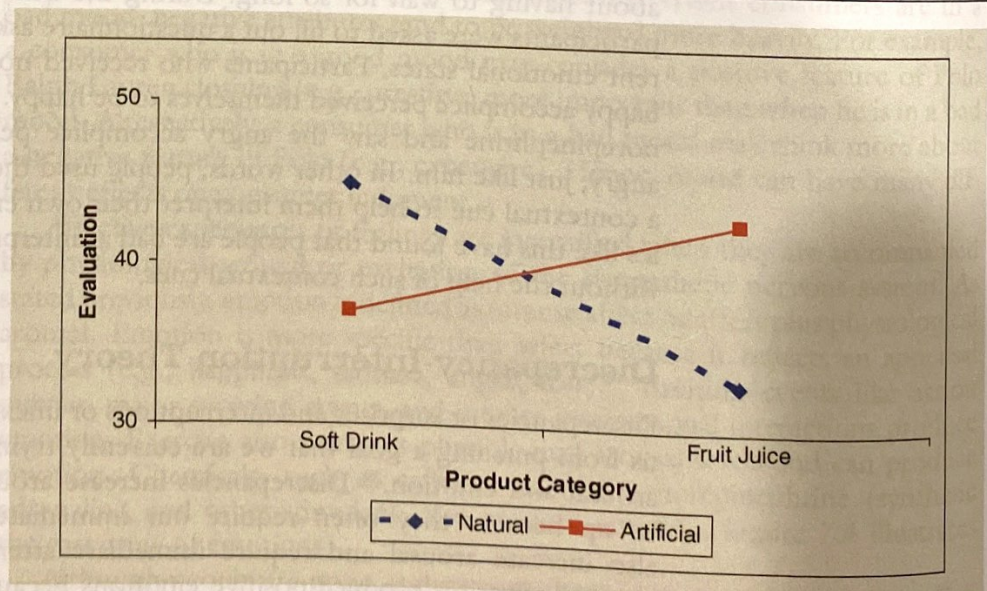
### Discrepancy-Interruption Theory

Discrepancies or surprises and interruptions or unexpected events that prevent us from pursuing a goal that we are currently trying to achieve also increase arousal and emotion.<sup>29</sup> Discrepancies increase arousal or alertness and wake us up because they often require our immediate attention. Interruptions also increase arousal and require immediate attention. Small discrepancies or small surprises produce positive emotions because they are usually mildly interesting and thought-provoking. On the other hand, large discrepancies or big surprises usually produce negative emotions because they suggest that our current expectations are completely wrong. No one likes to be completely wrong. Similarly, no one likes to be interrupted while working on something. So, the more important the task is, the more intense our negative emotional reaction is when we are interrupted.

Because small surprises are good, new products that are slightly different from other, more familiar products produce a positive emotional response, leading to positive evaluations of the products. Because big surprises are bad, new products that are completely different from other, more familiar products produce a negative emotional response, leading to negative evaluations of the products, at least initially. Hence, designers of new products should add features (bells and whistles) that are mildly surprising and interesting because these make new products more interesting. Developing a completely new product is risky because consumers will not know how to react to it or use it, leading to negative emotions, at least initially. Time and money are often required to educate consumers about completely new products to help them fully appreciate the benefits of an innovation. Televisions, computers, smartphones, and other high-tech products were not overnight sensations.

Consistent with discrepancy-interruption theory, research shows that brands that are moderately different from other brands in a particular product category produce positive arousal and are evaluated more favorably than brands that are typical of a product category.<sup>30</sup> For example, most soft drinks are high in preservatives and artificial ingredients. However, new fortified soft drinks that are marked as “healthy” (e.g., Vitaminwater) taste different and interesting and are evaluated positively in blind taste tests. Conversely, most fruit juices are all natural, and consequently, a fruit juice that is high in artificial ingredients tastes different and interesting. This results in more favorable evaluations in blind taste tests as well (see Figure 7.5).

**FIGURE 7.5** | Discrepancy-Interruption Theory



Recent research shows that, relative to male consumers, female consumers have better visuospatial skills and are better at detecting and categorizing incongruent products.<sup>31</sup> As a result, female consumers evaluate incongruent products more favorably than male consumers. Furthermore, when consumers

focus on utilitarian attributes, moderately incongruent products are preferred over congruent products.<sup>32</sup> However, when consumers focus on experiential or hedonic attributes, congruent products are preferred over moderately incongruent products. This pattern of results suggests that utilitarian functions are primary to hedonic functions: consumers must first figure out how to use a product before they can fully appreciate its hedonic benefits.

## OBJECTIVE

5

**Excitation Transfer Theory**

Because consumers are bad at interpreting their emotional states, the excitation or arousal produced by one stimulus (e.g., exciting media events, exercise, stimulants, discrepancies, interruptions) can transfer or spillover to other stimuli.<sup>33</sup> **Excitation transfer theory** rests on four key principles of emotion:

1. Arousal is nonspecific with respect to emotion (i.e., arousal intensifies both positive and negative emotions).
2. People are insensitive to small changes in arousal.
3. People often look for a single cause for their arousal, even when there are multiple causes.
4. Physiological arousal dissipates at a slower rate than perceived arousal.

These principles suggest that a narrow window exists in which arousal can transfer from one stimulus to the next, thereby intensifying the emotional experience attributed to the second stimulus. Initially, little transfer occurs because a single, salient stimulus is perceived to be the cause of the arousal (e.g., an exciting movie). After a long period of time, arousal goes away, and nothing is left to be transferred. After a moderate period of time, however, excitation transfer is possible.

At this intermediate point in time, an individual is still aroused from the original stimulus, but because the stimulus event has passed (e.g., the movie is over), the person doesn't perceive that he is still aroused. For example,

an exciting sporting event or action movie is likely to produce arousal that could—potentially—transfer to an advertisement embedded in the program. Ads aired during the Super Bowl and other exciting events may benefit from this excitation transfer process: the advertised product may seem more exciting if its ad is aired during an exciting program. But timing is crucial. If consumers attempt to interpret their emotions while watching an exciting movie or TV program, they would recognize that the source of their arousal is the program, not the products advertised during commercial breaks. However, if people attempt to interpret their emotions shortly after an exciting event, they are more likely to confuse their arousal from the event with interest in the advertised brand.

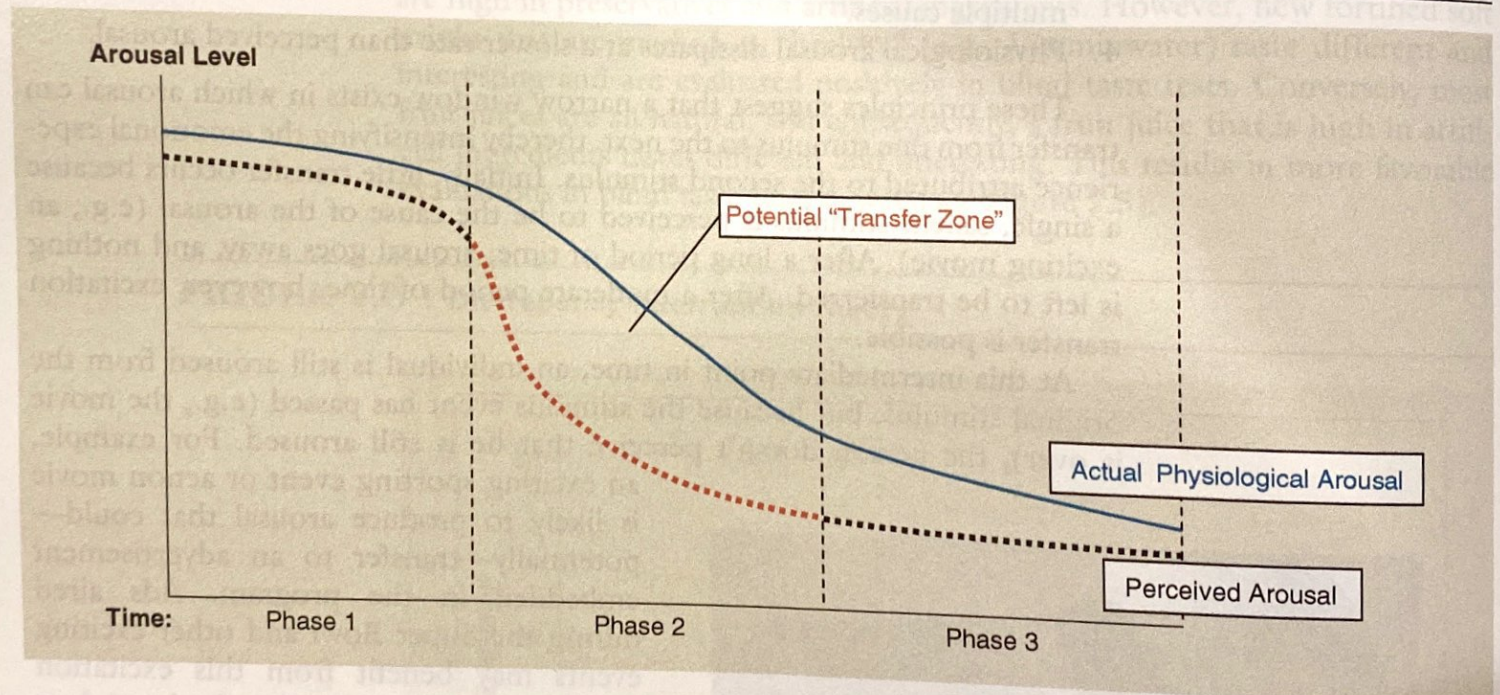


Tetra Images/Jupiter Images

Advertising time during sporting events is oftentimes costly, though the potential benefit to marketers gained from consumers confusing their sporting excitement with excitement for advertised products can potentially offset those higher costs when those heightened emotions translate into more product revenue.

It's no surprise that watching a scary movie at a theater can produce arousal, and this arousal can later be transferred to your date! In fact, transference produces a more intense emotional response than the original arousal. Furthermore, because people are bad at interpreting their emotional states, the fear produced by a horror movie can be misinterpreted as romantic attraction to the date. Again, timing is crucial. If people attempt to interpret their emotions *while* watching a horror movie, they should recognize that they are feeling fear. If people attempt to interpret their emotions shortly *after* a horror movie, however, they are more likely to confuse romantic attraction for fear. Of course, the mass media can produce all kinds of emotions (e.g., love, hate, fear, anger, sadness), and if the timing is right, arousal will transfer to other stimuli (e.g., other people, advertised products, products consumed while watching an exciting event)—see Figure 7.6.

**FIGURE 7.6** | Misattribution of Arousal



### Emotional Appeals in Advertising

Advertisements often use feelings such as fear, guilt, nostalgia, humor, and sexual excitement to sell products. It is often tempting to try to create ads that appeal to everyone by using emotional appeals and rational appeals, or logical arguments. However, research shows that mixing emotional appeals with rational appeals often fails because the two types of appeals tend to compete and interfere with each other.<sup>34</sup> Think about how disruptive it is when you watch a scary or suspenseful movie on TV, and the movie is interrupted by a funny beer commercial. Research shows that mixed appeal ads are more

difficult to comprehend and to remember.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, fear appeals in ads can be so aversive that consumers try not to think about the ads or about the problems mentioned in the ads. As discussed earlier in this chapter, fear appeals are effective only when consumers' attitudes serve an ego-defensive function. Furthermore, consumers need to believe that they can cope with the fearful event and that the advertised product is effective for eliminating the problem completely.<sup>36</sup>

Advertisements sometimes use feelings of guilt and sorrow to encourage consumers to donate to nonprofit organizations that help feed hungry children or prevent animal abuse. For example, in "Save the Children" ads, starving African children are shown living in squalid conditions while a narrative voiceover says that you can help. When these ads included statistics about how the donations would help, however, consumers inferred that they were just one person and one person cannot do anything to alleviate such a huge problem.<sup>37</sup> Again, mixing emotional appeals with rational information like statistics appears to backfire.

Humor in advertising can be persuasive, provided that consumers are already familiar with and like the brand and need little additional information. In addition, the humor should be related to the product and also be simple, appropriate, and not offensive.<sup>38</sup> Extreme humor can be offensive, as the writers of *South Park* know full well. Furthermore, experiments using several different versions of mock ads for fictitious brands showed that humor works better for simple messages than for complex messages, and that subtle but product-relevant humor improves memory for product information.<sup>39</sup>

## Marketing in Action



### Sex in Advertising

Like other types of emotional appeals, sexual appeals can attract attention to an ad but distract consumers from thinking about the advertised brand.<sup>40</sup> Hence, sex works best when it is relevant to the advertised brand, and when the advertising message is simple. When sex is not product relevant, television commercials have lower scores on comprehension, memory, and persuasion.<sup>41</sup> A meta-analysis, or a study that statistically combined the results of 53 academic journal articles and 23 dissertations, revealed that physically attractive models increased persuasion for messages related to social competence and impression management, slightly increased persuasion for messages related to intellectual competence, and had no effect on messages pertaining to integrity or compassion for others.<sup>42</sup>

Research has also investigated the effects of the types of television programs in which commercials were embedded. In one study, consumers saw nine commercials for common grocery store products embedded in a television show that had sex, violence, or neutral content. Memory performance—immediately after watching the program and 24 hours later—was higher in the neutral program condition than in the sex or violence conditions.<sup>43</sup> In a follow-up study, consumers saw 12 ads for inexpensive, unfamiliar products embedded in television programs with sex, violence, or neither. Again, memory performance was better in the neutral program condition than in the sex or violence conditions.<sup>44</sup> Hence, advertisers need to focus on the content of the television programs that they sponsor as well as on the content of their own ads.