

# Brandwashed, martin lindstrom (zoom in-zoom out)

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



" By uniting us against a common enemy, fear also brings humans together. It has a preserve yet delicious binding quality. It's for this reason that we love to spread fearful rumors, sometimes blowing them out of all proportion just to heighten the sense of danger." (33. Brandwashed)

Zoom In:

In this passage, Martin Lindstrom denotes a method used by big corporations and advertising companies that literally scares people into buying things. Lindstrom explains that " uniting us against a common enemy, fear also brings humans together", which is a stark statement, but definitely not an inconceivable one. This is such interesting prose, because when we humans feel afraid, the last thing we are thinking about is how united we are. We are thinking about what we can do to eradicate the danger, and how we can feel safe. In 2009, sales of the well known hand sanitizer Purell rose by 50%, which also happens to be the year that the H191 pandemic (better known as " swine flu") erupted.

This statistic is fascinating because we can see how us humans were scared of something, in this case, getting the swine flu, but we managed to unite and buy 50% more hand sanitizer. This was our way of eradicating the danger, and feeling safe. The most enthralling part of this is that hand sanitizer does nothing to prevent the H1N1 virus, because it is spread through the air in the form of a cough or sneeze from a infected individual! You may be asking yourself " How and why did people choose to buy Purell to feel protected from H191?". Well, Purell posted a statement on their website saying that " According to the Centers for Disease Control, one of

the ways you can help protect yourself from Swine Flu is by practicing good hand hygiene. specifically using an alcohol-based sanitizer."

What they are trying to insinuate is that their product is the key to good hygiene -- and that without it you will not be as healthy, and will be at risk of getting the Swine Flu. The CDC did say that hand sanitizer is good for hand hygiene, but the CDC never said that hand hygiene protects against Swine flu, because that would be a scientifically proven lie. Simply put by Lindstrom, the company totally blew the CDC's statement " out of all proportion just to heighten the sense of danger". This example is really captivating, because it sheds light on a situation that most people would never question. It really shows how big corporations are using fear to provoke emotions, which lead us to buying thing in order to once again feel safe.

Zoom Out:

Does fear really sell? Everyone is afraid of something but regardless of what that is, there is no doubt that fear sells. Since few products actually solve a person's fears but rather placate fear temporarily, brands that effectively evoke feelings related to fear can establish long-term relationships with consumers who think they won't be safe unless they keep buying the brand. Anyone who pays for any kind of insurance is proof that fear sells for a long, long time. You choose to buy life insurance; because you are afraid of yourfamily's well being once you are gone.

There are so many ways to portray messages of fear, and that's why it's used in so many diverse industries to sell both products and services. For

example, the sunscreen industry shifted its messaging from helping people get the darkest possible tans, to helping people avoid getting skin cancer. By using a message that elicits feelings of fear in consumers' minds, sunscreen brands turned what could have been a brand disaster into a brand opportunity. "Cutting your sun exposure is easier than cutting out a skin cancer". This message persuades us to buy more sunscreen, by making us fear the consequences of skin cancer.

Personal:

Almost every person that I know has been persuaded to buy something by fear, or has at least seen a form of advertisement in which fear is used as a medium. I can recall an anti-smoking ad that I once saw on the morning news. It depicted footage of a real life open-heart surgery, gore and all, because the victim had smoked cigarettes his entire life. The commercial was so vivid, so vial, so real that I felt the need to reach for the remote, and change the channel.

I have seen many commercials like that one since, all getting up close and personal with lifelong smokers who have debilitating deformities, all reaching out to try to get people to quit. These commercials have persuaded viewers to never go near a cigarette, and have definitely taught me that the consequences of smoking certainly outweigh the pleasure of popping open a pack and lighting one up. These commercials use fear as a medium, but aren't trying to sell anything, besides the truth.