



Growing a WasteLess Mindset

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Unlimited Growth is *Cancer*.



Pause for a moment and let that sink in.



The Cause

The Cure

The Diagnosis

Now that we've delivered the terrifying news, take a moment to collect yourself. As you move forward, you may go through the various phases of **grief**. Grief over the abandonment of the capitalist system that everything you knew was built on.

Here's the good news: You have already passed the first phase: Denial. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this.

Disclaimer: Depending on where you're at in your journey of **waste reduction**, you may find yourself slipping into *Anger* (Grief Phases 2), *Bargaining* (Grief Phase 3), and *Depression* (Grief Phase 4) as you read through *Part I* of this book. Don't worry, we'll be with you every step of the way, helping to "reset" your emotional charge at every turn.

After exploring what has caused our cancer (Part I), we'll look at what *stage* we are at (Part II) and finally, we'll explore the cure (Part III). Try not to skip ahead. It is important to read all three parts, because Part III builds on the preceding two.

Finally, when we reach Phase Five of Grief (Acceptance), we are more open to hearing the good side: The Cure, in other words, what options we have.

So, let's start our journey together!



The Cause



The Cure



The Diagnosis

The Cause



The Cause

The Cure

The Diagnosis

In North America, consumption has become a lifestyle. How we got here was no accident, it was systemically planned.

The industrial revolution has made us more efficient at producing goods and services at scale, but it came with a caveat. Mass production requires mass consumption or else there would be mass unemployment. ¹

*That mass consumption needs to be financed in one of two ways:
with **cash** or with **debt**.*

Increasing wages cuts into companies' profits, which leads to unhappy shareholders, so "cash" is out. This has given rise to our current "debt economy," where everything from vegetables to houses can be bought on credit.

Today, nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of Canadians (73.2%) ² have some type of outstanding debt and collectively, we now carry a debt of \$2.1 trillion (2019) ³.

To sweeten us this financial suicide, consumption today is "**convenient**."



The Price of Convenience

Convenience is an addiction that many of us increasingly suffer from. Large corporations, intermediaries, and “disruptive” tech startups got us hooked with manipulative marketing magic.

Now, just to clarify: Marketing in itself is not inherently evil, it is merely a tool for communicating about an existing offer that has value for a customer and society at large. However, when it is no longer about communication but is instead guilting or scaring people into action, that line is crossed. And many companies have crossed that line.

Instead, free one-day shipping and free samples and all those other heaven-on-earth promises are *hell for Earth*. Convenience comes at a huge cost and **all living beings, including ourselves**, are paying that price.





The Environment Suffers

Quick note on vocabulary: When the industry is talking about “natural resources” they use words like “extracting raw material,” “harvesting wood / fish / meat,” and “mineral commodities.” We intentionally do NOT engage in this kind of phrasing. After all, we’re talking about living, breathing beings here that suffer either directly (being killed or cut) or indirectly (toxic waste).

The environmental costs of mass consumption are, well, *massive*:

- **Production** in any shape or form requires Nature’s “riches.”
 - Unearthing these requires an enormous amount of energy and water.
 - It also involves crowding out animals and plants to access and use their land.
 - In addition, the unearthing practices result in swindling amounts of toxic waste, fumes, and runoff that further impact all living beings in that area.



Aluminum is produced from bauxite.

Energy requirement: In the US, from where we import 43% of our aluminium ⁴, it takes an average 16,232 kW/h to produce 1 tonne of aluminium (compared with 77 kW/h to produce 1 ton of steel). ⁵ In Washington State, Oregon, and Montana, the 10 smelters that produce 1/3 of the United States’ aluminium, use up about 1/5 of the power generated in those regions. This is why in some countries, aluminium smelters are exempt from reaching renewable energy targets. ⁶

Toxic Waste: Bauxite mining releases massive amounts of toxic waste into the environment, such as *perfluorocarbons*, which are highly potent greenhouse gases that have estimated atmospheric lifetimes of 10,000-50,000 years ⁷ and are 9,200 times more harmful than carbon dioxide. ⁸



- **Transporting** these products from production facility to production facility, to distributors, to stores and warehouses, to “consumers” (that’s us).

Transportation, is responsible for 27% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Canada. ⁹

- At its end of life, which, due to planned obsolescence comes much faster than just 50 years ago, most products will enter one of over 10,000 landfills in Canada ¹⁰ or 77 federally operated incinerators ¹¹ as **Waste**.

Emissions from Canadian landfills account for **20% of national methane emissions**. ¹²

Incineration produces a lot of toxic ash (which ends up in the landfill) and gas (dioxins and furans) and actually contributes the greatest amount of greenhouse gas emissions compared to other *dirty energy* options, including coal. ¹³





- When strict environmental protection laws exist in a country such as Canada, large corporations will often unearth what they need in countries where environmental protection laws are either non-existent or can be circumvented, leading to the **“outsourcing” of environmental degradation** to already marginalized populations.

The solution: Buy less.





Small Businesses Suffer

Large, predatory retailers whose market position allows them to squeeze their suppliers into price cuts, enter into legal battles with the government against minimum wage increases, and undermine efforts of their workforce to unionize, can offer rock-bottom low prices. Small businesses who lack that bargaining power cannot compete.

Restaurants may feel forced to sign up for any of the *convenient* online food delivery platforms to be competitive. These programs charge a 20-60% fee on these orders, cutting into their already fairly low profit margins. Increasing prices is often not an option for restaurants, because they compete with low-cost fast-food chains. ¹⁴





Why is this important? It is important, because small businesses employ close to **70% of the total private labour force** in Canada, compared to medium-sized businesses (around 20%) and large businesses (around 10%).
¹⁵ If small businesses fold under the immense pressure of large corporations, unemployment rates will soar, while at the same time again increasing the gap between the rich and the poor.

The solution: Buy less. Shop small.

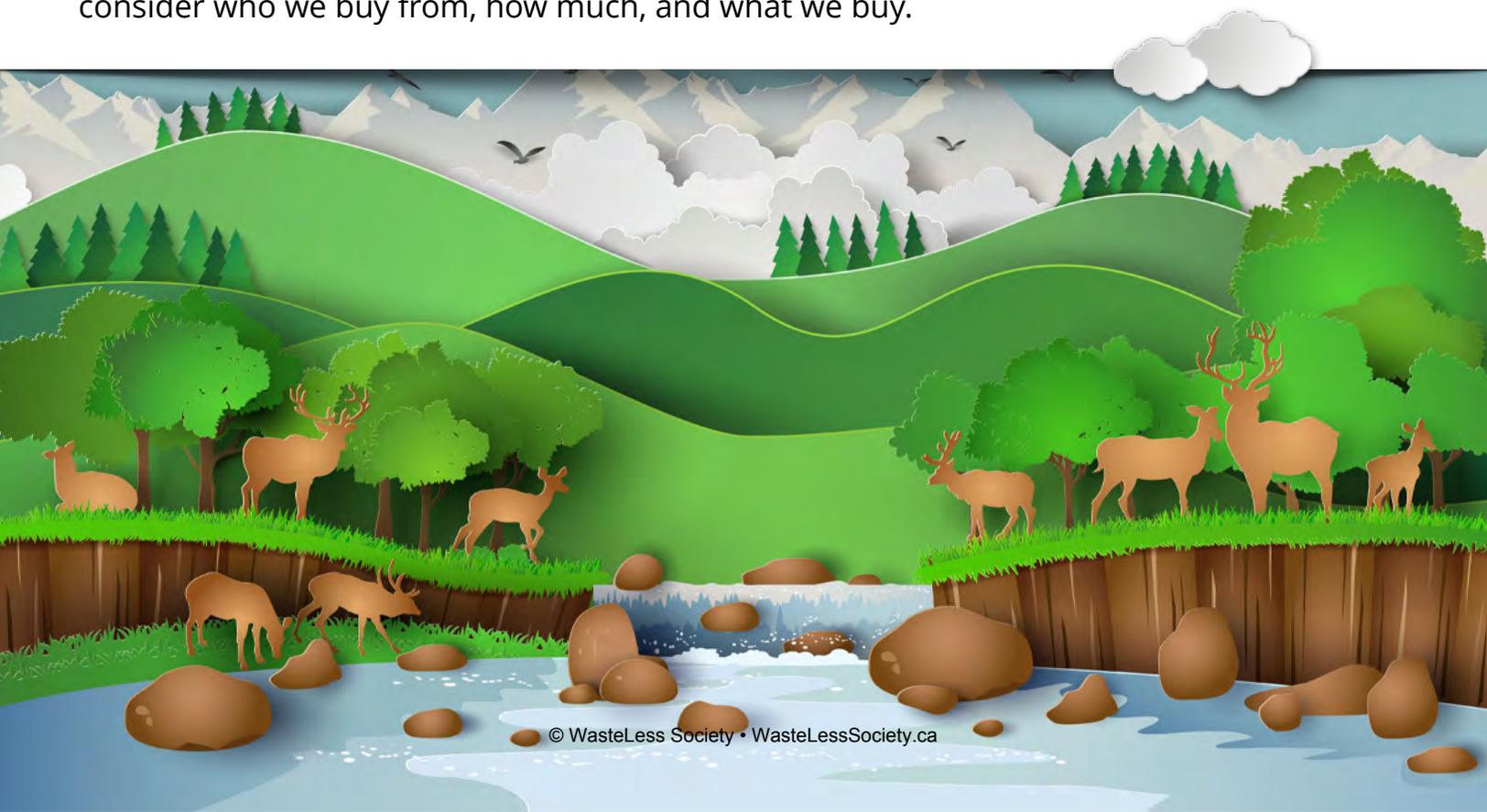




Society Suffers

- Particularly when the *promise* of job creation enters the picture --and it usually does when large corporations wish to enter a market-- these large corporations often score substantial subsidies (*tax dollars*) from governments to support their market entry or sometimes, their survival. These corporations can then leverage their massive financial capital to greenwash their efforts by pouring millions of dollars into PR and advertising excessively highlighting one area where they are doing a little bit of good (e.g. the *promise* of job creation) while hiding their massive pile of *dirty* practices (e.g. environmental degradation). Be hyper-alert when you hear “job creation” as an argument used by corporations or the government. It may be used to lower resistance when they’re justifying a decision that will have negative side-effects.

The nonprofits who are trying to expose these dirty secrets and counteract those environmental damages are working on little more than a few thousand dollars of donations every year and can simply not compete with billion dollar greenwashing budgets and government subsidies of dirty industries. This is why we all need to carefully consider who we buy from, how much, and what we buy.





- Mass consumption is a contributing factor to poverty around the world. A lack of bargaining power among poor countries, who disproportionately create the products we consume, leads to rising inequality because poor populations are often forced to sign contracts that are not in their favour, leading to child labour, sweatshops, and very low compensations for the work they do.
- With the outsourcing to “cheap labour” overseas and replacing jobs with technology, many individuals have already found themselves on the streets with no prospect to find stable employment or income, leading to further suffering.
- While “pay it later” programs and credit cards may be a convenient way to let us fulfill our ultimate role of being a faithful *consumer* in an economic system stacked against us, these debts will eventually catch up to us, and with stagnating salaries and ever-increasing prices, the financial pressure will keep increasing.





- Mass consumption also has psychological effects on the consumers in rich countries. Materialistic values are often linked to increases in depression, anxiety, racism and antisocial behaviour. In addition, those finding themselves in the low-income category are facing existential fears as falling sick or being laid off could result in homelessness for their entire family.

The solution: Buy less.





The Cause



The Cure



The Diagnosis

The Diagnosis



Earth Overshoot Day 2021: July 29th

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when we have exploited more “ecological resources” than our beautiful planet can produce in a given year.

Even though Earth Overshoot Day has occurred earlier and earlier, in the last decade there has been one exception: In 2020, COVID caused us to be less wasteful, delaying this threshold by three weeks, bringing it to a “low” last seen only in 2004. ¹⁶

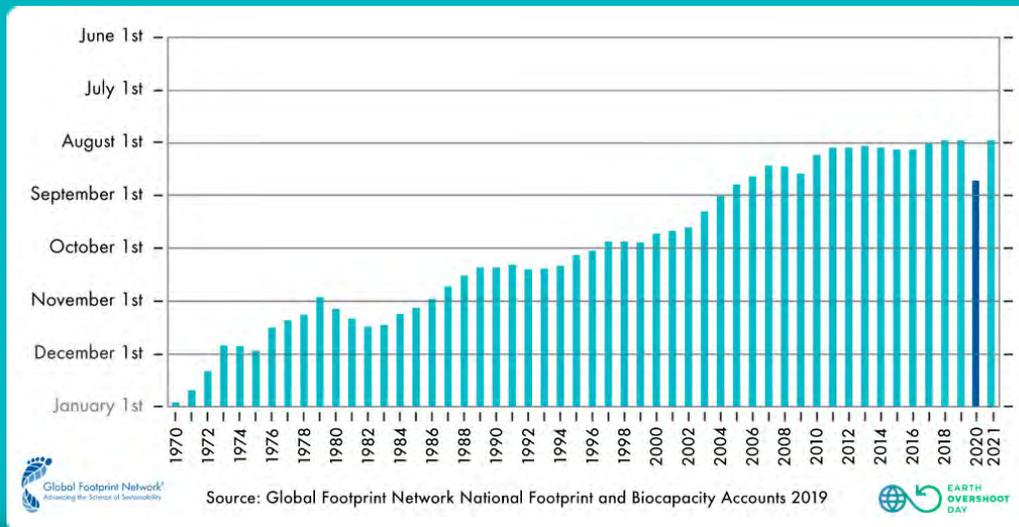


Image: Slight adaptation of 2020 statistic to include 2021. Original image source as shown.

This image reflects what we already know: Our consumer culture is not sustainable.

What’s worse: If every individual on Earth lived like the average American, we would need 5.2 planets to support us. If everyone on Earth lived like the Japanese or like Europeans, this number would drop to 3 and 3.3 respectively. ¹⁷



A Nasty Side-Effect: Waste

Waste is the result of mass consumption. For us to continuously consume, we need to also continuously dispose of our previous acquisitions. Either because they no longer work (planned obsolescence) or because we no longer need or want them.

Donating what still works to charity to make room for newer commodities may seem like a good solution to **our waste**, but it becomes a problem when **4 billion consumers** do so. ¹⁷ Some poor countries that we think our clothing donations will go to have already stopped accepting them to protect their own industries, ¹⁸ understandably so and 84% of these donations ends up in landfills and incinerators in the United States ¹⁹ with Canada likely rocking similar numbers.

Wasting has become a way for us to feel or display *rich*. If we can waste, it means that we must be affluent enough to be able to *afford to waste*. Sometimes wasting is even integrated into our customs and traditions. In some cultures it is seen as rude to finish the food on your plate or beverage in the glass, because it is a sign that the host did not provide enough.





Other times, we may waste because wasting is “cheap.” Some parts of our current socio-economic system are set up to make it more expensive to “do the right thing.” Often, buying in bulk can be more expensive than buying the same items pre-packaged in large quantities, because of economics of scale. Similarly, companies may leave their lights on at night because electricity is cheap and it “doesn’t hurt.” But it does hurt. It hurts the environment.

- In countries where electricity is expensive, people and businesses don’t waste electricity as much.
- In countries where water is expensive, people and businesses don’t waste water as much.
- In countries where waste hauling is expensive, people and businesses don’t waste as much.

We breed what we seed.





Recycling is NOT the Cure

"But what about Recycling?" I hear you say? WasteLess Society does not consider Recycling as a solution to our environmental suicide. Recycling is a bandaid, not the cure.

It is a greenwashing effort that makes us feel better about our wasteful habits. Only 9% of everything that Canadians throw into their blue recycling bin (e.g. 3 million tonnes of plastic annually) ²⁰, actually gets recycled. THIS is why recycling is NOT a solution to our problem. Only **Waste Reduction** can make the difference. And that starts with rethinking consumption.





The Cause



The Cure



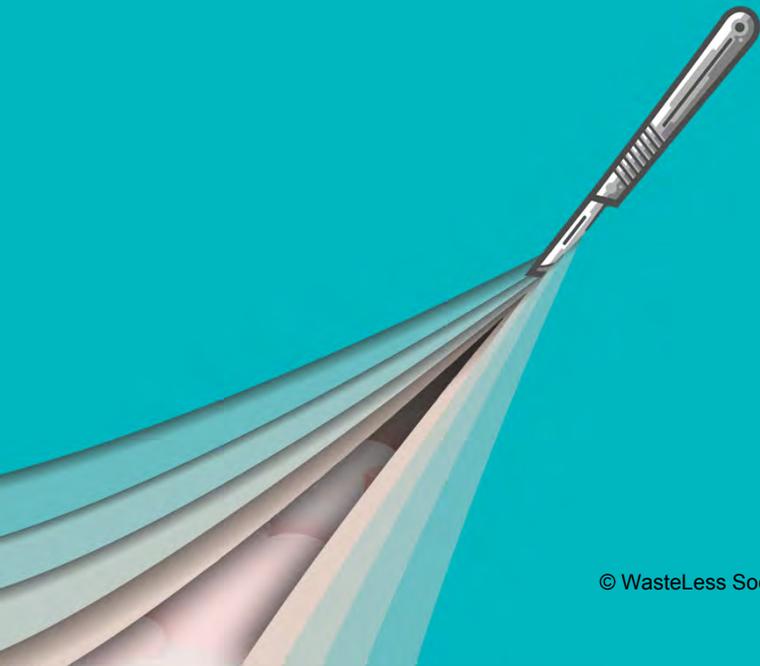
The Diagnosis

The Cure

Now that we are aware of some of the many cultural causes of our wasteful habits, let us rethink consumption.

In this Section we will explore how marketing and advertising influences our behaviours and how to bring their manipulations into our consciousness.

To break free from our consumer culture, it is essential that we are able to recognize the trap, so we can take a step back and avoid falling into the rabbit hole.





REDUCE the amount of “Stuff” you buy.

An estimated 90% of our buying decisions are made unconsciously and if buyer’s remorse eventually kicks in, (also known as “cognitive dissonance”) we then employ our consciousness to rationalize that decision, not the other way around. ²¹

In order to “unlearn” these consumption triggers, we need to be able to recognize their patterns and equip our awareness with more bargaining power, so we can consciously influence the outcome.

Unlearning the Patterns

While marketing is not inherently evil--it is merely a tool to intuitions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large-- many organizations now are using manipulation to get your precious, hard-earned money.



Welcome to the Happy Shopping Mall

Welcome to the Happy Shopping Mall, conveniently located only a 15-30 minute drive from pretty much anywhere in your metropolitan area, we offer you a large parking area so you don't have to worry about parking and of course we (usually) don't charge for this so you won't leave just because your parking ticket is expiring.

Here, every employee will smile at you to make you feel welcome and happy. We've also chosen all colours and scents in this shopping mall intentionally to complement this happy sentiment. We know that "happy" will make you stick around longer.

Do you love the gentle, upbeat music we're playing all around? We knew you would. After all, sad music makes you depressed and depression doesn't convert. Upbeat music makes you buy, so go ahead and have a good time.

And what a relief: Outside the most miserable weather was raging but in here we've created "sunny" just for you, through our wonderfully bright, sunny-day-coloured artificial light. Have you ever wondered why there are usually no windows in shopping malls or at least not at a level that is "below" the artificial light? Well, it's because we figured out that it may 'reset' your sense of time when you notice that it starts getting dark outside. This is also, why there are usually no clocks in shopping malls.





Remember that the goal of *Happy Shopping Mall* is to make shopping “convenient” for you, our valued customer? This is the reason why besides clothing stores, shoe stores, and toy stores, you will also find banks and grocery stores, sporting goods, houseware, jewellery, and travel agencies, so you can run all of your errands here.

And should you get hungry during your shopping spree, we’re also providing you with coffee shops and restaurants so you can stay longer and won’t go home to make lunch or dinner. Take your pick, sit down, and indulge, at sometimes 3x the price a home-made meal would cost you.

Is boredom kicking in for you or a family member? What a downer. Just drop them off at the movie theatre or the kids’ play area. Just don’t go home.

And if you’re shopping as a couple, please don’t split up and “meet at six o’clock at the food court.” Take one of the shopping mall maps and go on a treasure hunt together. That’s why the stores catering to men, women, and children are all interlaced, after all.

And don’t get frustrated and leave if you get lost. Just ask one of our helpful attendants at one of the information centres across the mall and they’ll be happy to guide you to the next location where you’ll spend some of your precious money.





Are you still starting to feel stressed or overwhelmed? We understand. Just relax in one of the many green oasis, where water fountains surrounded by artificial plastic trees and shrubs will promote an inner sense of peace and calm. Feeling better? Great, let the shopping continue, there's so much to see!

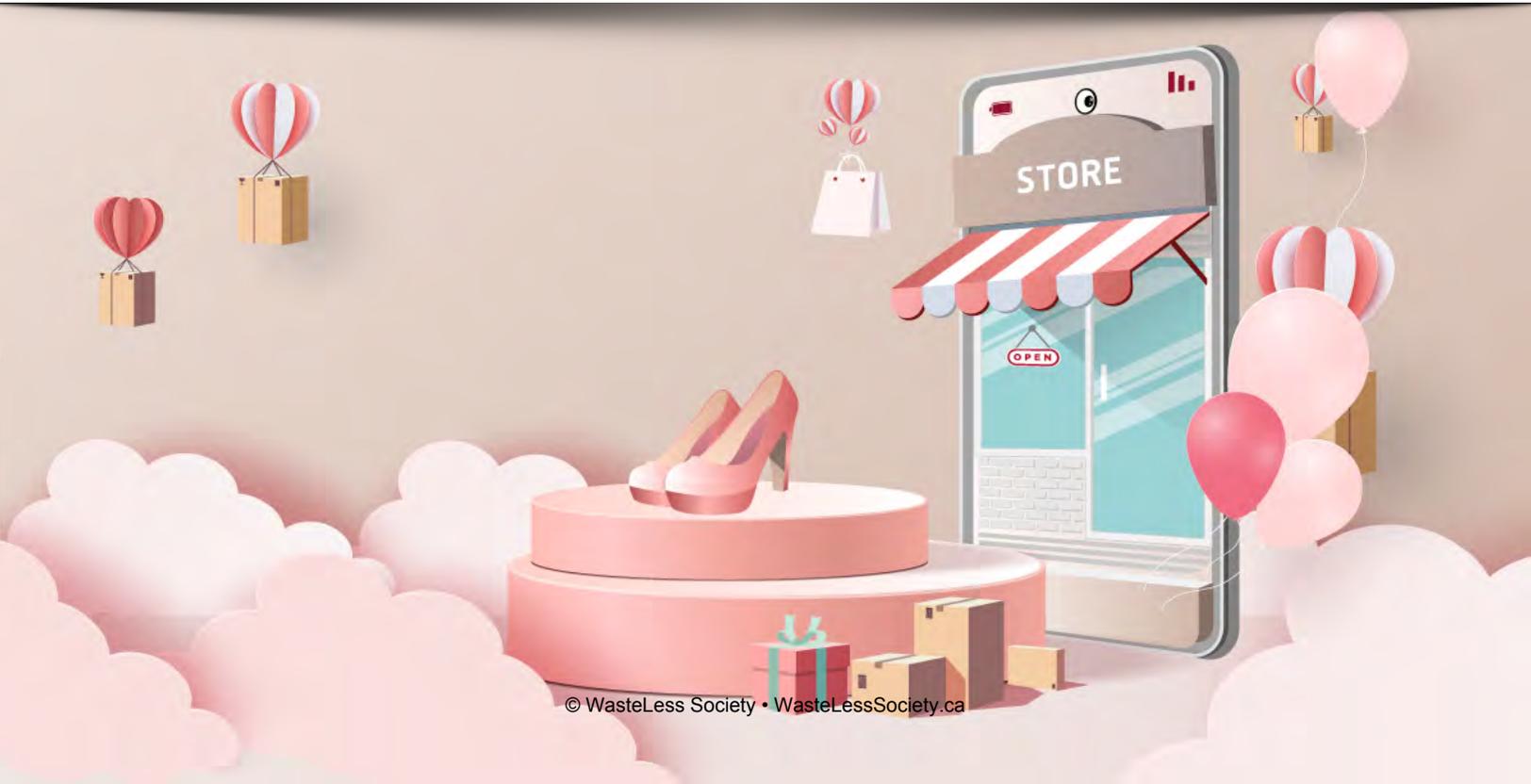


While the tone here may be satirical, these concepts and many more are at work in shopping malls across the country, and globally. Some malls take this even further and offer indoor ski resorts in the desert (Mall of the Emirates, Dubai) or an amusement park and zoo (West Edmonton Mall, Canada), thereby making a visit to the shopping mall an "experience."



Recognize the patterns and let them sink in next time you are headed to a shopping centre.

May this ability be the wax in your ears that allows you to resist these seductive "buy more" calls. Do you really need more or did you just come for one item and got sucked into hundreds of dollars of "more"?



Emotions influence thinking

Emotions influence our thinking more so than the other way around. This is why abstaining from something you know is bad for you (e.g. junk food) but that makes you feel good (because its greasy goodness and fillers spike your blood sugar levels, leading to a “sugar high”) will eventually result in you breaking down and indulging in it anyway.

Then, when cognitive dissonance sets in, you think up many wonderful reasons why this indulgence was either necessary or unavoidable.

Going shopping when we feel bad will often result in the purchasing of stuff we really don't need, similar to how doing our groceries when we're hungry will result in purchases of food and sweets that were not on our shopping list.

“Emotions influence thinking” is also why *envy* and *societal status* messaging work, such as in the following example:

This product will make you happy / sexy / successful / beautiful / a great mom or dad.





Whether directly or indirectly, a lot of companies are highlighting **perceptual flaws or shortcomings** (e.g. “tired of your ‘love handles’ showing through your dresses?”) to then offer their **solution** (“our panties will tuck away that belly for a more confident YOU”).

Read this again. In this example, it was implied that you feel unhappy with your ‘love handles.’ Were you indeed unhappy or did they just create this insecurity? And then the offered solution implied that these ‘love handles’ negatively impact your self-confidence. Do they? Or did this company just serve a hit to your self-confidence by highlighting that these ‘love handles’ *should* make you feel insecure and thus impact your self-confidence?

This type of *fear marketing* is incredibly effective and is the reason why many ads feature sexy women or men, why some slogans have little children claiming that “my dad / mom is the BEST”, why we see transformations from an ugly duckling to a beauty princess, or why we are served some version of the “I did it and so can you!” mantra.





Why do emotional triggers work?

Companies spend a lot of time trying to “identify your pain points”, in other words identifying (or sometimes creating) a problem, for which they then selflessly and without hesitation offer us their wonderful, effortless, magical, and convenient solution.

These pain points are often perceptual (are you *really* not happy / sexy / successful / beautiful? Are you *really* not a great mom or dad?). This triggers a very subtle fear response and fear overwrites all other emotions as well as critical thinking, making it easier to convince you to spend your hard-earned money on *their* solution.

Another reason, why *envy* specifically works well is the so-called *hedonic treadmill* ¹⁸. We are primed early on in school to always compare ourselves with our peers. This continues into adulthood and when you and your peers move up the ladder of success roughly at the same speed, the new spots on the ladder of success quickly feel “normal.” This makes your advancements seem almost invisible to you. In some cases, when your peers advance faster than you do, you may even feel left behind, even if you *love* your job, career, family, community, etc. In either scenario, you may suddenly feel that you are failing at life and not advancing fast enough. This feeling is icky and some companies are masters at tapping it at just the right time to then offer you an edge: A new beauty product that prevents aging, a car that attracts younger women, a cute kid that tells its playmates that its mom/dad is THE BEST.” What a great solution to play catch up or even get ahead!



What to do when you’ve recognized this pattern

When a product promotion makes you feel insecure or yucky, simply move on. A company that makes you feel bad, insecure, desperate, or depressed just so that they can sell you their latest innovation doesn’t deserve your money. You’re worth more than that. “You are enough!”



Repetition, repetition, repetition

Having the same message repeated at least 7x breeds familiarity and lowers our critical thinking, especially if there's an element of social proof, like when we encounter this message across different channels (e.g. online, radio, TV, a friend talking about it, your idol singing its praises, etc.). This eventually leads us to believe the message even if the first time we heard it, it didn't resonate. This is why branding, slogans, and jingles are such critically important components of marketing. This kind of placement and exposure is often deliberately created, to eventually change our associations to reflect that newfound "wisdom."

Talking about branding. Did you know that babies at the young age of 6 months can already form mental images of corporate logos and that children at the young age of two already start developing brand loyalties. ¹⁸

It may surprise you, but marketing to children is legal in Canada. For advertising to children under the age of 12, there is a self-regulatory system in place that requires pre-clearance for certain types of advertising, such as food commercials. ¹⁹ Despite this, however, the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity among those aged 2 to 17 years has jumped to 34% ²⁰.





Therefore, having these regulatory frameworks in place doesn't seem sufficient. These systems also do **not** prevent organizations from hiring researchers and psychologists to identify what makes kids tick and how to frame their advertising to reach children in their various development stages, moulding the next generation of brand loyalists and consumers.

Now stepping away a little bit from advertising, “repetition, repetition, repetition” also works in other domains, such as with conspiracy theories and political campaign slogans. One of the things that may have helped Trump win the election in 2016 was having an easy-to-remember slogan that resonated with many American citizens that felt that even though they were doing everything that's expected of them in society (e.g. having a job, a house, a spouse, 1.9 children) they were still hurting and not getting ahead in life. At the same time, Trump's team kept their Democratic rival busy defending herself, thus watering down her own electoral campaign messaging, while Trump could repeat his easy-to-remember slogan again and again and again. This is how powerful repetition can be.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

There's not much you can do about being exposed to repetitive messages. Try to bring this pattern into your full awareness when you notice it and pay attention to how it is influencing you and your thought processes. Once you are consciously aware of the manipulation, you will have an easier time blocking the message out.





Testing it out: Trials and Samples

If we're allowed to "test drive" a product or indulge in a food sample, a faint **feeling of indebtedness** creeps up and if it grows strong enough or if we are reminded that we just received something for free, we often feel the need to reciprocate.

In normal, day-to-day social interactions, when a friend asks us for help or advice, "natural giving" ensues. We naturally want to help our friend because we care about them. This is the kind of giving where no reciprocal *action* is expected, though words of gratitude (a little "thanks") are appreciated. Reciprocating by lending us a hand next time an opportunity arises is a beautiful way of showing appreciation and gratitude, however, reciprocity is not our underlying motivation for our willingness to help our friend in the first place. When our friend decides to offer us some assistance, it is rather an example of their way of "natural giving."





Now, have you ever seen a movie where one of the protagonists proudly exclaims “I’ll call him. He owns me a favour”? Popular media is priming us to believe, through continuous repetition, that apparently our friend is now “in our debt.” So, who keeps score? Is our friend *really* in our debt for every single action that we agreed to perform? Think about that. Some friends may ask for more help than others, maybe because they are struggling with a handicap or oppression under our societal system, and thus require a bit more assistance to have the same level of access than we can enjoy. But does this really put them in our “debt” or is helping someone who does not have the same level of access as we do for one reason or another not a societal obligation in itself that doesn’t require any form of societal pay-back?

So, let’s connect this with marketing.

When a company volunteers a sample of their product or offers you a free trial, you do not owe it to them to purchase the product, software, or service. They decided to give it to you. You didn’t ask for it.

But there’s another force at play with trials and samples: **A perceived loss**





When we test-drive a car, or sit at a desk in a furniture store or read the sample of a book at our favourite book store, we can “see ourselves” driving that car, writing at that desk at home, or reading this book on our couch, in our inner eye. Not buying the car, the desk, or the book may then feel like we’re losing something that we’ve already received. But we *can* win it back and make it ours again, if we pay for it. This perceived “loss” can be very subtle but it can also kick in as a very strong feeling that shouldn’t be underestimated. So, beware of this when you are offered to “experience” a product that you didn’t plan on buying.

As you may have witnessed already, “trial offers” can actually **cater to a variety of senses**, such as touch (tactile), seeing (visual), smell (olfactory), hearing (auditory), taste (gustatory), movement (vestibular), or even body awareness and muscle memory (proprioceptive). Engaging these senses can make the use of a product “second nature” to us and will ultimately influence our behaviour when the trial period is ending.





Another reason why samples and trial offers are so effective is the “**sunk cost fallacy.**” If you’ve just spend a few hours becoming accustomed with a new software, you’re more likely to use it after the trial expires rather than testing a competing product, because of the time and “brain power” you’ve already invested. Because you will never be able to “recover” this investment, or so the fallacy goes, paying the premium for this product is justified to avoid that your efforts were not in vain.

Another trick often applied with trial offers is built on **inertia.** The company will ask for your credit card details to “start the trial” in the hopes that you’ll forget to cancel your account and the subscription will run its course once the trial period has ended.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

Feeling of indebtedness: When you are being offered a sample and you know that you're a sucker for feeling guilty as a result, the first step is to say "no thank you." Then keep reminding yourself that they chose to offer the sample; you didn't ask for it. Once you're ready, you may be able to accept that offer without guilt.

Perceived loss: It may be difficult to stay objective, so one strategy you can employ is to find reasons that argue against that purchase: Didn't the car smell really funny? Was the desk not a bit too high? Was the book really *that* interesting?

Catering to your senses: This is a tough one. Here the best course of action may be to just recognize the pattern when it happens and bring it into your conscious awareness. Then you can observe your thoughts and impressions more objectively. This requires a fair bit of training but you'll get there.

Inertia: When it comes to trials that require your credit card details, head to the "account" or "billing" section right after you've signed up for the trial and cancel your subscription. This will usually end your subscription on the day the trial period ends, not right away. Disaster averted. If this is not an option, because the company planned in an additional roadblock of having to email a representative or make a phone call to cancel your account effective immediately, make a note in your calendar for the day prior to the trial end date, reminding you to cancel your subscription.





Fear of Missing Out

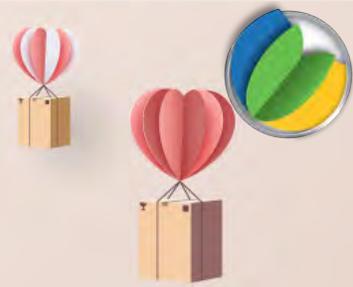
This is likely one of the most powerful techniques in a marketer's toolbox.

There are many ways this usually unfolds (which we'll cover in a second). The reason why this is so powerful is because it combines elements of

- social proof ("if others are buying it, it must be good")
- scarcity ("LIMITED time offer" / "LIMITED supply only")
- loss perception ("you snooze, you lose")
- loss aversion (we experience losses more severely than equivalent gains)
- urgency

With "Limited time only" and "Limited supply only" offers, scarcity, loss aversion, and urgency are often artificially created. The product itself is usually not *actually* running out and neither is the offer's pricing low enough to seriously cut into the profits sufficiently that the company will go bankrupt if they continue selling the product at the discounted price over an extended period of time. When these offers create a huge demand for the product as a result, the company will usually supply more products, because unmet demand results in losses for the company. And even though the products may sell at a lower profit, economics of scale usually works in the company's favour—they are carefully calculated that way.





When reviews are displayed, that rave about this amazing product, this adds the element of “social proof,” usually intentionally.

Flash sales and *seasonal sales* are commonly utilized on to get rid of superfluous inventory to make room for new products in the warehouse or store front. They generally employ scarcity with loss aversion and sometimes a dash of urgency (e.g. a time limit) gets mixed in for good measure.

FOMO offers are great examples of fear marketing, and are supposed to trigger impulse buys.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

The best way to “reset” your impulses and put your “critical thinking” hat back on, is to take a step back and ask yourself if you *really* need this product. Would you still buy the item if its “sales price” was the product’s regular price and if the shelves were stacked to the rim with this item. If the answer to any of these questions is “no” then you likely won’t *need* it.





Influencer Marketing

Since the advent of social media, influencer marketing has become a buzz word in the marketing industry. It underlies the following principles:

Visualization: Seeing your idol use a particular product/brand may trigger you to visualize yourself using that product/brand.

Association: Seeing someone who shares characteristics that you identify with, use a particular product/brand, can influence you to form a positive image of that product/brand also. After all, if *THEY* like it, it's probably great. And you strive to be like your idol, so maybe using this product is the secret to their success?

Affiliation: By using a product that your idol is using, you feel like you are part of their "in-group."





How do companies know who the influencers are? There's something called the Klout Score, which measures an individual's follower count and interaction rates on various social media channels. The higher the score, the higher their perceived influence. Companies understand that individuals with a large following are idolized and similar to well-known celebrities, can help the company increase sales if one of their products gets featured by an influencer.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

Remind yourself that influencers are usually not promoting these products for free. They receive remuneration either as affiliate income or other forms of compensation. So when you see your idol promote a product—directly or indirectly—, take your rose-coloured glasses off for a moment and glance at them the way you would look at a sales representative. When the product placement is over, feel free to put those rose-coloured glasses back on your nose and enjoy the show.



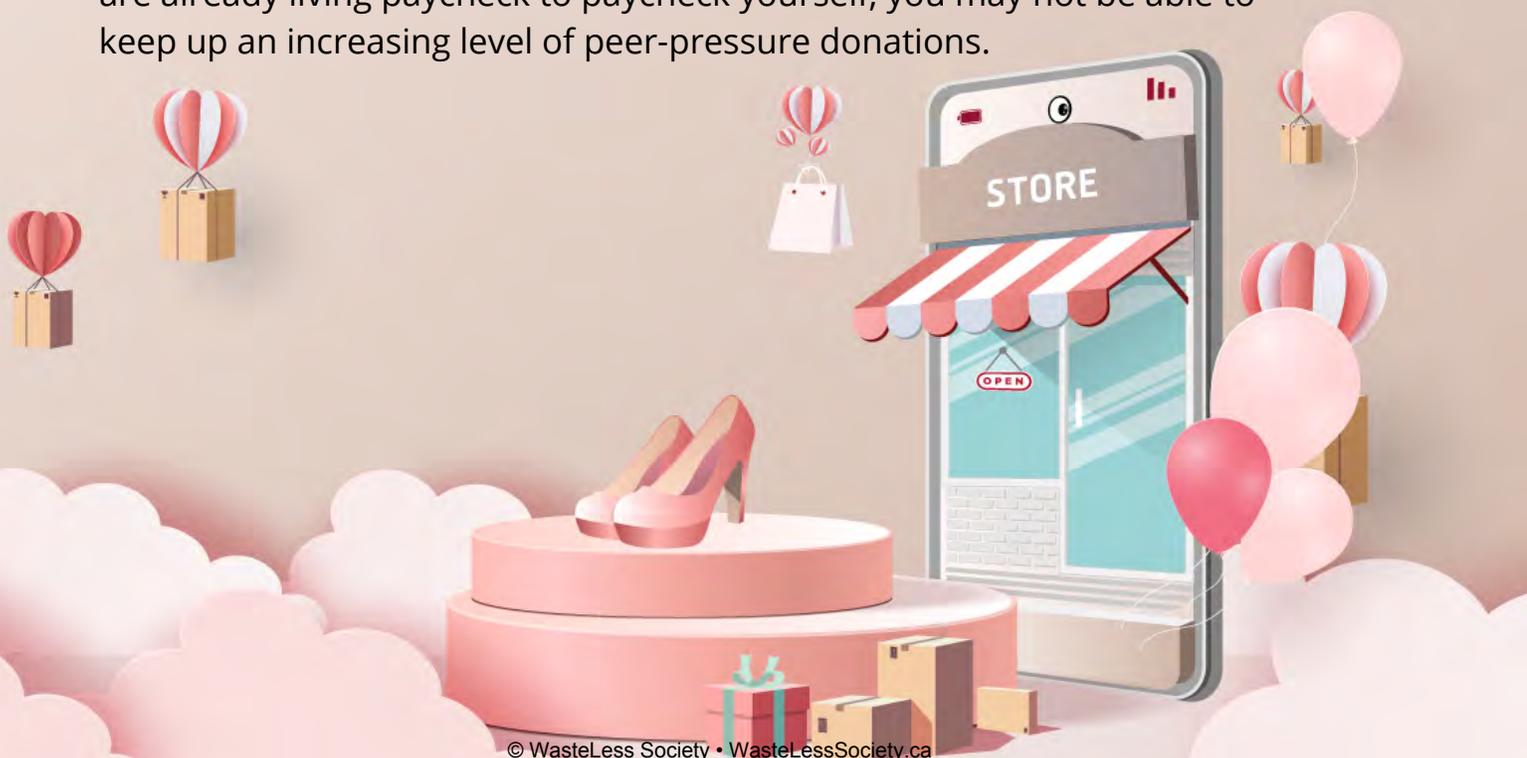


Buying the Change You Wish to See in the World

Companies sometimes ask you to “make a donation” through them to a charitable organization. The part of the story that’s missing here is that *they* will get the tax receipt, not you. What’s more: In the future they will boast how ..% of their profit was spent on this and that charitable organizations in the previous year, enticing you to celebrate *them* as the hero, when a large chunk (potentially all) of these donations were in fact *our collective* dollars.

Sometimes, when you approach the checkout at your local grocery store, you will also face the question whether you’d like to make a donation. We often feel a sense of pressure to respond favourably to this little request, because what will the cashier or the person behind you in the queue think of you if you say “no”? That you’re a heartless person who doesn’t care about others? This is peer pressure in action.

Once or twice, this is certainly not something to spend too much time worrying about. However, as more and more organizations follow suit, these little asks can quickly escalate into a financial liability and especially if you are already living paycheck to paycheck yourself, you may not be able to keep up an increasing level of peer-pressure donations.



Unless the company that is doing the fundraising for these organizations is indeed chipping in a percentage of its own profits also, the cost for this “corporate social responsibility campaign” is externalized, while the profits (positive image, tax receipt) are internalized.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

To resist this urge, you can simply respond with "Thank you, I've already made my donations for this year." This will re-establish that you're the charitable kind and establishes that you prefer to pick the causes yourself that will receive your hard-earned money in exchange for a tax receipt that you will benefit from.

As for the image of the company that is using its customers' donations to rake in a tax credit, simply keep this fact in mind when you read about how wonderfully generous this organization is. Companies that are **not** *pretentious* can usually be spotted easily. They are the ones that actually engage in various causes, become spokespeople of those causes, host fundraising events for those causes, give their staff days off to volunteer at charities that support those causes, and leave out no opportunity to show how these causes are important to them. Everything less than that is performative.





Foot-in-the-Door / Door-in-the-Face

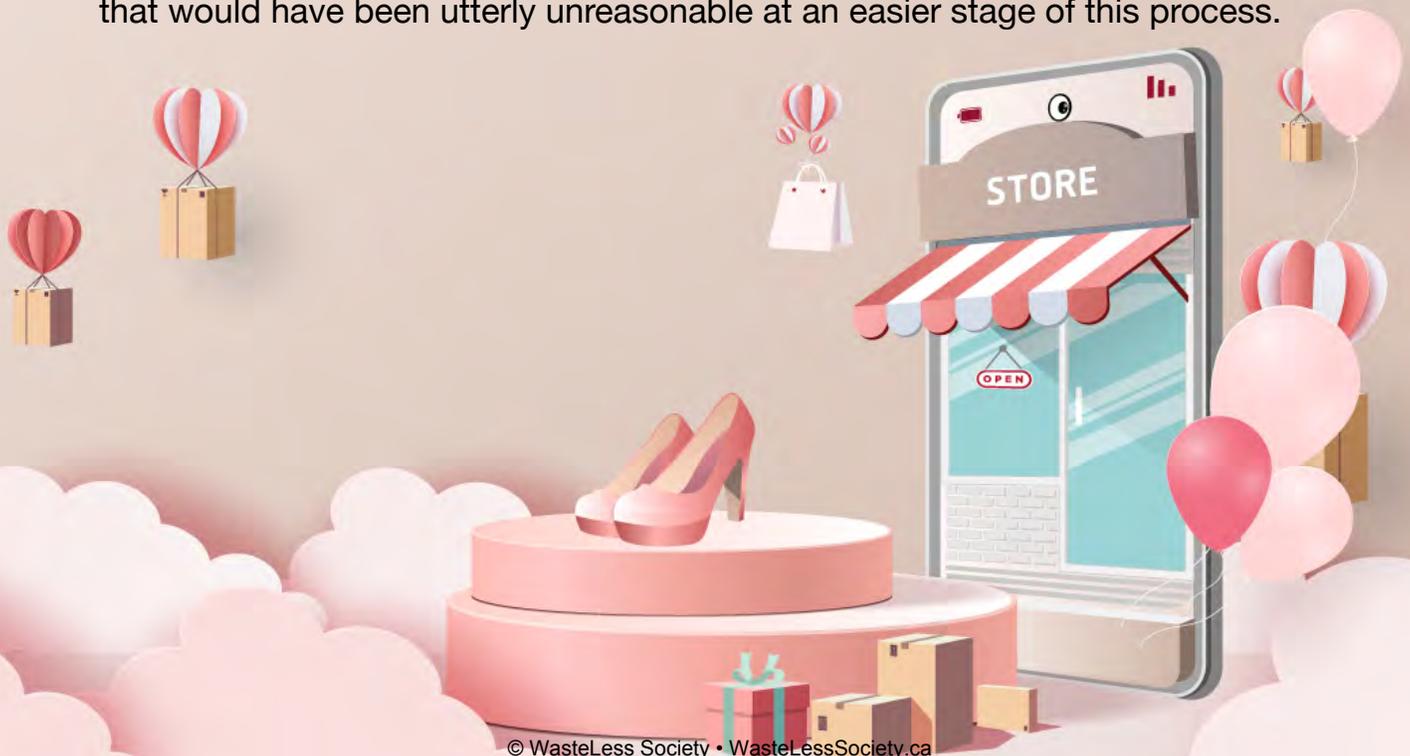
Foot-in-the-door is a concept where you will be asked to commit to a small thing first and then for a bigger commitment later.

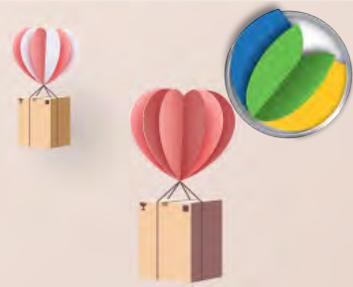
The reason this works is cognitive dissonance. When we commit to a small ask we display ourselves in a certain way (e.g. as individuals who *are* curious, helpful, and accommodating). Then later, when the big ask arrives, cognitive dissonance hits. We do not really want to say “yes” to this ask, but we already committed to the first thing they asked of us and we don’t want to be a naysayer *NOW*... After all, we’re still that curious, helpful, and accommodating individual.

And there’s often another element at play with the foot-in-the-door scenario: *Reciprocity*. You’ve helped me, so now it’s my time to serve up.

This can be applied to information sharing as well. First we’re asked only for a little bit of information and before you know it, a multinational corporation knows where you live and work, how many children you have, what your income bracket is, the name of your dog, and more. This will then be used for profiling and may even be sold to so-called third-party providers, among them data mining companies who will sell your information to other organizations for a fee.

Foot-in-the-Door requests escalate gradually; each additional ask navigating within a “reasonable” realm, but at the end of the line lies a large commitment that would have been utterly unreasonable at an easier stage of this process.





Door-in-the-face is the reverse. You are first exposed to an unreasonable ask that you will most certainly decline and then, when you most likely feel some guilt for declining the request, you will be asked for a much smaller commitment. Many empathetic people will fall for this, because they want to “recover” their self-image of being that kind, nice, accommodating individual.

This technique is often employed when the second ask would likely be refused, without a preceding guilt trip. Imagine someone asking you out on a date. You are not interested and the person knows that so the first ask is “marry me” which you vehemently decline. If then asked to “at least go on a coffee date” with that individual you may be more inclined to say yes.

This concept also uses reciprocity, because the (sales) person asking for the smaller commitment has already made a compromise, so to speak, by downgrading the ask.

Either of these techniques can sometimes also be coupled with social proof by first highlighting that one of your friends, colleagues, superiors, etc. has already agreed to the ask. In the latter case (superiors), it also plays on the concept of “authority”, another powerful marketing concept.





What to do when you've recognized this pattern

Similar to the recommendation above, drop your feeling of indebtedness. You have just as much the right to say “no” as they have the right to ask for your compliance in this little dance. If you're not happy with the partner that is asking for the dance, you don't need to accept.





There are, of course, dozens and dozens more of these concepts and techniques. The ones we've explored now should, however, get you started and over time, the ones we did not touch on here, will rear their ugly head and ask for your attention. You will notice them by the same little feels:

guilt, fear, peer-pressure, loss aversion, etc.

Hello
Spring
SALE
50%
LIMITED OFFER

Lorem ipsum is a simple fictional text for further editing. Consectetur adi sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt. Fornectetur edi sede lemod teypor.



BLACK FRIDAY
SUPER SALE

SUPER SALE
50% OFF

LIMITED OFFER

SPECIAL OFFER

BEST OFFER

50% OFF!

SHOP NOW



REDUCE the number of children we have

There we said it. Before you angrily put this book aside, let us provide a bit of background. And remember, we didn't say "have no children," this choice is ultimately up to all of us. What we are saying, however, is that a lot of factors need to be considered when making this life-changing choice.

Putting our dilemma into a perspective, some studies suggest that when we take into account the total amount of "resources" required to satisfy our human *needs*, while keeping our ecosystem intact, they optimal population size is calculated to be roughly 3.1 billion people. ²²

Yes, statistics show that birth rates in the developed world are slowing down, however, the population growth itself is not, particularly when observed on a global scale, where it is increasing at an accelerated pace. While global efforts in education around family planning is a good solution, it is not enough. And here's why.

Even though birth rates may be going down (1.47 per woman in Canada in 2019 ²³), life expectancy continues to climb, offsetting the trend. The life expectancy for Canadians reached 82.4 years in 2019. ²³





Let's add climate change to the equation. We cannot wish "natural resources" into existence and so the "resources" we have, such as food and water, must be carefully managed.

Increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and greater frequency of extreme weather events are already negatively affecting crop yields (e.g. corn and wheat) in many lower-latitude regions, while in many higher-latitude regions, these yields may increase.²⁴ We are indeed located in these higher-latitude regions where some crop yields are becoming easier to grow. For decades the people on the global South have provided us with the coffee we drink, the food we eat, and the materials for the clothes we wear. Hardly any of these things are being grown locally right now. So when the time comes and food production can increasingly be shifted up North, it will be our turn to assume the responsibility to provide for the global South.

So, we all need to free ourselves of our short-term vision and start planning ahead. We need to ensure that we make decisions that will benefit our entire species and planet for generations to come, not just now.





The Cause



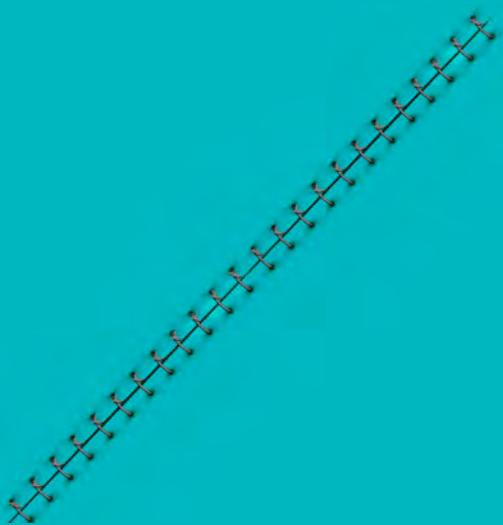
The Cure



The Diagnosis

Healing Takes Time...

... so be patient with yourself and others





Why Behavioural Change Takes Time

We have just explored extensively the consequences that can result from the perception of an impending loss. This is true not only for marketing; it impacts Change Management as well.

We have become so accustomed to our way of life, our behaviours, and our convenience. Change? We'd rather leave this to others. The perception of impending losses of these privileges that we've become so accustomed to are one of the reason for why so many people (not you, right?) exert such a tremendous amount of pushback when they are faced with a dilemma (such as climate change) which requires them to change their behaviour.

In order to create a WasteLess Society, it is incredibly important to be aware of this within ourselves. If we want to create the change we'd like to see in the world, we first need to look in the mirror and practice that change ourself. Only then can we teach the process to others.

At the same time, it is important to be understanding and patient when others are struggling with these insights.





Remember that giving something up always causes some level of grief.

Anger, which often surfaces in the form of pushback, is the second stage of the grieving process (the first one is denial). If you're going through this, please don't turn around and move back towards denial. That's the wrong way. Join us on our journey forwards instead. We'll be there for you along the way.

If you're helping someone else join our WasteLess Society, remember that even in the face of immense pushback, you're planting a seed. That seed needs time to grow and it will grow on its own time. Just keep watering that little seed and leading by example.





Thank you for your time, support, and devotion!

“

Do the best you can until you know better. Then
when you know better, do better.

~ Maya Angelou

”





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WasteLess Society

