

FROM THE
NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING
AUTHOR OF

buy·ology

Brandwashed

**TRICKS COMPANIES USE to
MANIPULATE OUR MINDS
and PERSUADE US to BUY**

Martin Lindstrom

FOREWORD BY MORGAN SPURLOCK

Also by Martin Lindstrom

buy•ology

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**Dorit, Tore, and Allan—
without you I would be nothing**

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MORGAN SPURLOCK
PRESENTS THE GREATEST
FOREWORD EVER WRITTEN

by Morgan Spurlock,
director of *Super Size Me* and *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*

Over the years, I've put myself in some of the most horrible situations and scenarios possible. I once traveled to a half dozen or so Middle Eastern war zones, including Pakistan and Afghanistan, in the hope of finding the exact coordinates of Osama bin Laden. I worked as a coal miner in West Virginia, and I spent nearly a month wearing a jumpsuit in a prison cell. I also wrote, directed, and starred in the movie *Super Size Me*, in which I gorged myself with McDonald's hamburgers, French fries, and sodas until my body was bloated, my liver was pâté, and my cholesterol was just this side of death.

But can I just go on record as saying that nothing—not jail, not black coal dust, not the Afghanistan mountains, not the awful mirror image of my own McTorso—prepared me for the world of advertising and marketing?

My latest film, *Pom Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*, is a documentary about the insidious ways corporations manage to get their brands in our faces all the time—and incidentally, includes my own efforts to finance my film by precisely the same means. (In the end, I approached roughly six hundred brands in all. Most of them told me politely to get lost. In the end, twenty-two of them agreed to sponsor my movie.) As is the case with all the movies I make, all I was looking for was a little honesty and transparency. This is the Information Age, right? Aren't honesty and transparency supposed to be "the thing" right now?

My goal in making *Pom Wonderful Presents: The Greatest Movie Ever Sold* was to make you, me, and everybody else in the world aware of the extent to which we are marketed to, and clubbed over the head with brands, just about every second of our lives. After all, you can't even go into the men's room at the mall without being obliged to pee on a urinal cake that's advertising "Spiderman 6." Nor can you escape the brand paradise that is your local shopping mall without climbing behind the wheel of your Toyota Scion LC, turning up the volume on the Keb' Mo' playing on your Apple iPod that connects to your car radio via a Griffin iTrip FM transmitter, and sliding your Dockers-enclosed leg and Nike Air Force 1 sneaker onto the gas, at which point you're assailed by one highway billboard after another for Kenny Rogers Roasters, Taco Bell, KFC, Papa Gino's, Holiday Inn, Comfort Inn, Marriott Courtyard Residence, Shell Oil, and—are you getting some sense of why I

wanted to make my movie? In one scene, I asked consumer advocate Ralph Nader where I should go to avoid all marketing and advertising entreaties. “To sleep,” he told me. It was a depressing moment.

Which brings me to Martin Lindstrom and the groundbreaking book you’re gripping in your hands.

I first met Martin when he agreed to appear in my film. I’d read his last book, *Buyology*, which explores the hot spots in our brains that compel humans to buy everything from Harley-Davidson motorbikes to Corona beers, and I thought he’d be an interesting, innovative person to talk to. As a global marketing guru who works with everyone from Coca-Cola to Disney to Microsoft, as well as a consumer who detests being manipulated by advertisers and corporations, Martin maintains a very fine line between what he knows and (how else to put it?) what he *really* knows. If you catch my drift.

In *Brandwashed*, Martin yanks back the curtains and serves up a page-turning exposé of how advertisers and companies make us feel we’ll be bereft, stupid, and social outcasts unless we buy that new model of iPad or that new brand of deodorant or that make of baby stroller whose price is equal to the monthly rent of your average urban studio apartment. Just as I do in my documentary, he aims to expose all that goes on in the subterranean world of marketing and advertising. Only he has one distinct advantage. He’s a true insider. Martin takes us into conference rooms across the world. He talks to advertising and marketing executives and industry insiders. He teases out some fantastic war stories, including some of his own.

Along the way he shows us the most underhanded ploys and tricks that marketers use to get us to part with our money. Such as scaring the crap out of us; reminding us of wonderfully fuzzy days gone by (which actually never existed); using peer pressure so we’ll feel like wallflowers if we don’t do, or buy, what the rest of the world is doing, or buying; using sex to sell us everything from perfume to men’s underwear; paying celebrities a bajillion dollars to endorse bottled water, or just cross their skinny legs (clad in \$300 jeans) in the front row of a fashion show; injecting what we eat and drink with this or that magical elixir that promises to give us a one-way ticket to Shangri-la and eternal life; and that’s not even the half of what you’ll learn inside *Brandwashed*.

In the course of these pages, Martin also rolls out a TV reality show called *The Morgensons*, where he implants a real-life family inside a Southern California neighborhood to test whether word-of-mouth recommendations work. (It’s fascinating, and also pretty horrifying, to consider that that sweet young couple down the block could actually be paid marketing commandos.) With my film and his book, he and I share a goal: to let consumers—you and me—in on the game, so that we know when we’re being conned or manipulated, and can fight back, or at least duck for cover, that is, assuming there’s anyplace left to hide.

Now, because I’m all about transparency, you may very well be saying to

yourself, *Hmm, Morgan seems to like this book a lot and he's never struck me as a bullshitter, so it must be worth reading, right?* Well, guess what. You've just been hooked by not just one but several of the marketing ploys you'll read about in this book.

Only, in this case, it happens to be true: *Brandwashed* and Martin Lindstrom will blow your mind. Don't just take my word for it. Read on and see for yourself.

INTRODUCTION

A Brand Detox

In the UK, there's an anticonsumerist movement called Enough. Its adherents believe that we as a society quite simply consume too much *stuff* and that our overconsuming culture is partly responsible for many of the social ills that plague our planet, from world poverty to environmental destruction to social alienation. Enough urges people to ask themselves, "How much is enough?" "How can we live more lightly, and with less?" and "How can we be less dependent on buying things to feel good about ourselves?"¹

I couldn't agree more. I may be a professional marketer, but I'm a consumer, too. As someone who's been on the front lines of the branding wars for over twenty years, I've spent countless hours behind closed doors with CEOs, advertising executives, and marketing mavens at some of the biggest companies in the world. So I've seen—and at times been profoundly disturbed by—the full range of psychological tricks and schemes companies and their shrewd marketers and advertisers have concocted to prey on our most deeply rooted fears, dreams, and desires, all in the service of persuading us to buy their brands and products.

Yes, I've been a part of it. No, I'm not always proud of it. I've been part of some campaigns that I'm incredibly proud of. But I've also seen how far some marketing goes. Which is why, around the time I started writing this book—one in which I hope to pick up where Vance Packard's 1957 classic, *The Hidden Persuaders*, left off and expose the best-kept secrets of how today's companies and their marketers are manipulating us—I decided that as a consumer, I'd quite simply had *enough*.

So last year I decided I would go on a brand detox—a consumer fast of sorts. More specifically I decided that I would not buy any new brands for one solid year. I would allow myself to continue to use the possessions I already owned—my clothes, my cell phone, and so on. But I wouldn't buy a single new brand. How do I define "brand"? Well, in my line of work I look at life through a particular lens: one that sees virtually everything on earth—from the cell phones and computers we use to the watches and clothes we wear to the movies we watch and books we read to the foods we eat to the celebrities and sports teams we worship—as a brand. A form of ID. A statement to the world about who we are or who we wish to be. In short, in today's marketing- and advertising-saturated world, we cannot escape brands.

Nevertheless, I was determined to try to prove that it *was* possible to resist all the temptations our consumer culture throws at us.

Yes, I knew this would be a challenge, especially for a guy who is on the

road over three hundred nights a year. It would mean no more Pepsi. No more Fiji water. No more glasses of good French wine. That new album I was hearing such good things about? Forget about it. The brand of American chewing gum I'm partial to? No dice.

How else did my lifestyle have to change? In the morning, since I couldn't eat any branded foods, like Cheerios or English muffins, I started eating an apple for breakfast. To shave, I use a battery-powered Gillette Power razor known as the Fusion; luckily I already owned that, but since I couldn't buy shaving cream, I had to start shaving in the shower. I traded my electric toothbrush and Colgate toothpaste for tiny travel ones the airlines offer for free, and I started using the other freebies that airlines and hotels provided.

Some habits I had to give up completely. Sometimes, in countries where eating the local cuisine can be dodgy, I bring along packs of ramen noodles. Well, sorry, but no ramen. I'd just have to take my chances. As any traveler knows, the air gets dry on long plane flights and in hotel rooms, so I typically use a face moisturizer by Clarins. Not anymore. I often pop a vitamin C if I feel a head cold in the wings. Now I'd have to make do with a glass of orange juice (the generic kind). Sometimes before TV appearances, if my hair looks crazy, I'll use a hair gel called Dax. For a year I'd have to run a comb through it and hope for the best.

If I didn't live the kind of life that I do, I might have been able to survive without brands for an eternity. But given my insane travel schedule, I knew I had to allow myself some exceptions, so before I kicked off my detox, I first set a few ground rules. As I said, I could still use the things I already owned. I was also permitted to buy plane tickets, lodging, transportation, and nonbranded food, of course (so I wouldn't starve). I just couldn't buy any new brands—or ask for any. Thus, in midflight, when the drinks cart came rolling around, I couldn't ask for Pepsi or Diet Coke. Instead, I asked for “some soda.” I continued going to restaurants, but I made sure to order the “house wine,” and if a dish claimed it came with “Provençal” potatoes or “Adirondack tomatoes,” well, I'd just have to order something else.

For the first few months I did quite well, if I may say so myself. In some respects, not buying anything new came as a relief. But at the same time it wasn't easy. Have you ever tried shopping at the grocery store and not buying a single brand? In airports, for example, while I'm killing time between flights, I like to wander through duty-free shops. I enjoy buying gifts for friends or stocking up on chocolate. Then I'd remember—*Martin, you're in brand rehab*—and I'd turn around and leave. At the time of my detox, the world was struggling through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression—one precipitated in part by out-of-control consumer spending. So like most people, I wasn't immune to the feeling that unless my purchases were essential and practical, I shouldn't buy anything. Yet knowing that so many people felt this way, companies and advertisers were doing everything in their power to get us to open our wallets. From London to Singapore to Dubai to New York, fantastic sales and bargains and special offers were

everywhere; it seemed every store window was a sea of signs for 50 percent off this or two for the price of one of that screaming my name. Each time I walked down the street, I seemed to be assaulted by posters and billboards for some sexy new fragrance or shiny new brand of wristwatch—on sale, of course. Every time I turned on the TV, all that seemed to be on were commercials: svelte twentysomethings gathered poolside drinking a particular brand of beer; rosy-cheeked children gathered at the breakfast table on a sunny morning, happily scarfing down a bowl of a certain brand of cereal; Olympic gold medalists performing feats of impossible athleticism in a certain brand of sports gear and sneakers. Somehow, even the packages of mouthwash and fruit juice and potato chips and candy bars I'd never noticed before were calling to me from the aisles of the supermarket and drugstore and seemed oddly alluring.

But I took the high ground.

Under the terms of my detox, I wasn't even allowed to buy a book, a magazine, or a newspaper (yes, I think of all of these as brands that tell the world who you are or, in some cases, would like to be perceived as being), and let me tell you, those fourteen-hour transatlantic flights got pretty boring with nothing to read. Then there were the frustrating times a friend would tell me about a fascinating article or novel that had just come out. Under normal circumstances, I would have hunted down the thing. Now I couldn't. Instead I'd stand balefully at the magazine kiosk or inside a bookstore, scanning the newspaper or magazine or book in question until a clerk shot me the universal look for "Get out if you're not going to buy something."

Harder still was being around my friends. I couldn't buy a round of beers at a bar or a gift for someone's birthday—and I happen to *love* buying people presents. Instead, I made up one lame excuse after another. I feared my friends secretly thought I was being a tightwad, that my brand detox was just an excuse to be cheap. But I stuck with it anyway. I was determined to prove that with a little discipline and willpower, I could inure myself to all the persuasive marketeering, advertising, and branding that surrounded me.

Then, six months into it, it all came tumbling down. The fact that my brand fast lasted only six months, and the fact that a person who should have known better got punked by his own profession, says a whole lot about just how shrewd companies are at engineering desire. So does what happened to me immediately after I toppled off the wagon.

If I Fell

My relapse took place in Cyprus. The night it happened, I was scheduled to give a keynote presentation. But when my plane touched down at the airport, I discovered the airline had misplaced my suitcase. It was gone. Which meant I didn't have anything to wear for my speech. I had the pants I was wearing, but no shirt other than a sweaty, unfragrant black T-shirt that I had no time to wash. Here's something they don't teach you in Harvard Business School:

Never give a keynote presentation naked from the waist up. This wasn't some drive-by, meet-and-greet appearance, either. It was an important presentation, and they were paying me well and expecting a good crowd. I admit it, I freaked out.

Half an hour after checking into my hotel, I found myself standing at the cash register of a local tourist trap, holding a white T-shirt in my hands. It was the only color the store had. The letters on the front spelled out "I ♥ CYPRUS."

I'd officially relapsed. And all for a crappy T-shirt, too. Not only did I break my detox, but for the first time in recent memory, I broke my all-in-black rule and gave my presentation wearing black pants and my ridiculous white T-shirt. Despite my questionable attire, the evening went well, but that wasn't the point. As they say in certain twelve-step programs, one drink is too much, and a thousand is too few. In other words, now that I'd given myself permission to end my brand fast, the dam had burst. I went a little nuts.

Twenty-four hours later, I was debarking in Milan, Italy, the fashion capital of the world. Let me tell you: this is not a place you want to be if you're trying to give up brands. Wouldn't you know it, but there happened to be a huge furniture sale in a store not far from my hotel! Fantastic handcrafted stuff, too! *Sold* to the little blond guy in the I ♥ CYPRUS T-shirt! From then on, I was buying San Pellegrino water, Wrigley's gum, and minibar M&Ms by the caseload. Then there was the black Cole Haan winter jacket I bought in New York, and . . . the list goes on. Over the next few weeks and months, I couldn't stop. You could have sold me roadkill so long as it had a label and a logo on it. All because of one lost suitcase and one cheap replacement T-shirt.

Yes, I make my living helping companies build and strengthen brands, and in the end, even I couldn't resist my own medicine.

That's when I realized I had been *brandwashed*.

The New Generation of Hidden Persuaders

When I was first approached to write this book as a follow-up to my previous book, *Buyology*, the world was still digging out from economic free fall. Did anyone really want to read a book about brands and products, I wondered, at a time when the vast majority of our wallets and handbags were either empty or zippered shut? Then it struck me: could there actually be a *better* time to write a book exposing how companies trick, seduce, and persuade us into buying more unnecessary stuff?

In 1957 a journalist named Vance Packard wrote *The Hidden Persuaders*, a book that pulled back the curtain on all the psychological tricks and tactics companies and their marketers and advertisers were using to manipulate people's minds and persuade them to buy. It was shocking. It was groundbreaking. It was controversial. And it's nothing compared to what's going on in the marketing and advertising worlds today.

Nearly six decades later, businesses, marketers, advertisers, and retailers have gotten far craftier, savvier, and more sinister. Today, thanks to all the sophisticated new tools and technologies they have at their disposal and all the new research in the fields of consumer behavior, cognitive psychology, and neuroscience, companies know more about what makes us tick than Vance Packard ever could have imagined. They scan our brains and uncover our deepest subconscious fears, dreams, vulnerabilities, and desires. They mine the digital footprints we leave behind each time we swipe a loyalty card at the drugstore, charge something with a credit card, or view a product online, and then they use that information to target us with offers tailored to our unique psychological profiles. They hijack information from our own computers, cell phones, and even Facebook profiles and run it through sophisticated algorithms to predict who we are and what we might buy.

They know more than they ever have before about what inspires us, scares us, soothes us, seduces us. What alleviates our guilt or makes us feel less alone, more connected to the scattered human tribe. What makes us feel more confident, more beloved, more secure, more nostalgic, more spiritually fulfilled. And they know far more about how to use all this information to obscure the truth, manipulate our minds, and persuade us to buy.

In the pages ahead, we'll learn all about what they know, how they know it, and how they turn around and use that knowledge to seduce us and take our dollars. We'll pull back the curtain on how specific companies have crafted the most successful ad campaigns, viral marketing plans, and product launches in recent memory, including how Axe probed the sexual fantasies of thousands of male consumers in preparation for rolling out its infamous body spray campaign, how Calvin Klein rolled out its best-selling fragrance, Euphoria, how a marketing campaign for a popular brand of vodka transformed an entire country's drinking habits, and more.

We'll look at the subtle yet powerful ways companies use peer pressure to persuade us. We'll see how they stealthily play on our fear, guilt, nostalgia, and celebrity worship, often in ways that hit us beneath our conscious awareness. We'll see examples of how some particularly devious companies have figured out how to physically and psychologically addict us to their products and how certain popular Web sites are actually rewiring our brains to hook us on the act of shopping and buying. We'll look at the new ways sex is being used to sell to us, including the results of an fMRI study that reveals something shocking about how heterosexual men *really* respond to sexually provocative images of attractive men and surprising findings about who marketers are *really* selling to when they "brand" the newest sixteen-year-old teen heartthrob.

We'll see all the underhanded ways companies are collecting information without our knowledge, not just about our buying habits but about everything about us—our race and sexual orientation; our address, phone number, and real-time location; our education level, approximate income, and family size; our favorite movies and books; our friends' favorite books and movies; and

much more—then turning around and using this information to sell us even more stuff. We'll explore the techniques advertisers and marketers are using to reach and influence children at a younger and younger age and read about alarming research revealing that not only do these techniques work, but children's lifelong preferences for brands can be shaped and set and at a *much* younger age than ever imagined.

I'll also be revealing the results of a revolutionary guerrilla marketing experiment I carried out in service of this book. The inspiration for it was the 2009 David Duchovny and Demi Moore movie *The Joneses*, about a picture-perfect family that moves into a suburban neighborhood. As the movie unfolds, it turns out they're not a real family at all but a group of covert marketers who are attempting to persuade their neighbors to adapt new products. Intrigued by this premise, I decided to stage my own reality television show, *The Morgensons*. I picked a family, armed them with a bunch of brands and products, and let them loose on their neighbors in an upscale Southern California gated community. The questions going in were: How powerfully can word of mouth influence our buying habits? Can simply seeing another person drink a certain type of beer, apply a certain line of mascara, spray a certain brand of perfume, type on a certain make of computer, or use the latest environmentally conscious product persuade us to do the same?

You'll find out in the last chapter of this book. And should you pick up the enhanced e-book version of this book (and have a video-enabled reading device), you'll get to see the Morgensons in action; throughout the book you'll encounter countless video clips of actual footage from the experiment.

My goal is that by understanding just how today's *newest* hidden persuaders are conspiring to brandwash us, we as consumers can battle back. The purpose of this book is not to get you to stop buying—I've proved that is frankly impossible. The purpose is to educate and empower you to make smarter, sounder, more informed decisions about what we're buying and why. After all, enough is enough.

Martin Lindstrom
New York



Located in Paris, CEW France, short for Cosmetic Executive Women, is a group of 270 female beauty-business professionals whose avowed mission is to show the world that beauty products not only are more than a trivial indulgence but can actually be used to improve people's lives. To that end, in 1996, CEW set up its first-ever Center of Beauty at one of Europe's most prestigious hospitals, with the goal of providing emotional and psychological support to patients afflicted by trauma or disease.

Many of the patients at the center suffer from dementia or from amnesia caused by brain traumas resulting from car, motorcycle, skiing, and other accidents. Some are comatose. Many are alert but can no longer speak. Most can't remember any details of their accidents, how they ended up in the hospital, or in many cases even their names.

Which is why the professionals at the Center of Beauty, led by former psychotherapist Marie-France Archambault, decided to enter their patients' pasts through their noses. Teaming up with the international fragrance company International Flavors and Fragrances, Archambault's team has bottled more than 150 distinct aromas, including the forest, grass, rain, the ocean, chocolate, and many others, and then run what they call olfactive

workshops, in which they use these fragrances to help patients regain memories they've lost.

CEW works closely with hospital medical teams and language therapists and also brings in family members and close friends to create a portrait of the life a patient was leading before his or her accident took place. Where did he grow up? In the country? In the city? What were the smells of his childhood? What were his youthful passions, his hobbies? His favorite foods and drinks? What smells might be most familiar? Then they design fragrances to trigger those memories.

CEW worked with one former cosmetics company executive who had suffered a serious stroke. When probed by doctors, he remembered almost nothing about his past. Yet once the CEW team placed the smell of strawberry under his nose, the patient began speaking haltingly about his youth. For another severely impaired patient who had no recollection of his motorcycle accident, the mere smell of street pavement was enough to “unfreeze” his brain. Just murmuring the words “tar, motorcycle” after sniffing the scent helped him take his first cognitive steps toward recovery.

The team has also worked with geriatric and Alzheimer's patients who, after being exposed to fragrances from their childhoods, have shown radical improvements in recalling who they were and are.

What this goes to show is that certain associations and memories from our childhoods are resilient enough to survive even the most debilitating of brain traumas. When I first heard about this amazing CEW program, it confirmed a suspicion I'd had for a long time, namely, that most of our adult tastes and preferences—whether for food, drink, clothes, shoes, cosmetics, shampoos, or anything else—are actually rooted in our early childhoods. After all, if a childhood love for the smell of strawberry can survive a serious stroke, the preference must be pretty deeply ingrained, right?

Studies have indeed shown that a majority of our brand and product preferences (and in some cases the values that they represent) are pretty firmly embedded in us by the age of seven. But based on what I've seen in my line of work, I'd posit that, thanks in no small part to the tricks and manipulations of probing marketers, stealth advertisers, and profit-driven companies that you'll be reading about throughout this book, our brand preferences are set in stone even before that—by the age of four or five. In fact, based on some new research I've uncovered, I'd even go so far to suggest that some of the cleverest manufacturers in the world are at work trying to manipulate our taste preferences even earlier. Much earlier. Like before we're even born.

Born to Buy

When I was very young, my parents loved the sound of bossa nova. Stan Getz. Astrud Gilberto. “The Girl from Ipanema,” “Corcovado,” “So Danco Samba,” and all the others. There was one long, dreary winter when they played bossa

nova practically nonstop. So I suppose it's little wonder I grew up to be completely in love with its sound (as I still am today).

Only thing is, my mother was seven months pregnant with me that winter.

Scientists have known for years that maternal speech is audible in utero; in other words, a fetus can actually hear the mother's voice from inside the womb. But more recent research has found that a developing fetus can hear a far broader range of tones that come from *outside* the mother's body as well. It used to be assumed that the mother's internal bodily sounds (the beat of the heart, the swooshing of the amniotic fluid) drowned out all external noises—like music. But studies reveal this isn't quite true; in fact, not only can soon-to-be babies hear music from inside the womb, but the music they hear leaves a powerful and lasting impression that can actually shape their adult tastes. Says Minna Huotilainen, a research fellow at the Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland, "Music is very powerful in producing fetal memories. When the mother frequently listens to music, the fetus will learn to recognize and prefer that same music compared to other music." What's more, she adds, "The fetus will build the same musical taste with his/her mother automatically, since all the hormones of the mother are shared by the fetus."¹ I guess that may explain why I still have so many bossa nova CDs in my collection. And on my iPod.

In and of itself, this seems pretty harmless, even kind of sweet. After all, who wouldn't feel a little warm and fuzzy inside knowing that their adult love of the Beatles or Norah Jones may be rooted in the fact that Mom listened to *Abbey Road* and "Don't Know Why" over and over while she was pregnant? But when you think about how many tunes, sounds, and jingles are linked to brands and products, this all starts to seem a whole lot more sinister. And there is indeed evidence to indicate that hearing tunes and jingles in the womb favorably disposes us to those jingles—and possibly the brands with which they are associated—later on.

In one study, Professor Peter Hepper of the Queen's University, Belfast, found that newborn babies will actually show a preference for a TV theme song (the more basic and repetitive the better) that was heard frequently by their mothers during their pregnancies. When newborns—just two to four days old—whose mothers had watched the long-running Australian TV soap opera *Neighbours* during pregnancy were played that show's theme song, they became more alert and less agitated, stopped squirming, and had a decreased heart rate—signs that they were orienting well to their environment. And it wasn't just because music in general has soothing qualities; as Hepper reported, those same infants "showed no such reaction to other, unfamiliar tunes."²

How can we explain this striking finding? Says another globally recognized fetal researcher, who chooses to remain anonymous, "While it is very difficult to test newborn babies, and the studies to date have been done on small numbers of children, it is possible that fetuses could develop a response to sounds heard repeatedly while they were in the womb, especially if those

sounds were associated with a change in the mother's emotional state. So if, for example, the mother heard a catchy jingle every day while pregnant and the mother had a pleasant or relaxing response to the jingle, the fetus, and later the newborn, could have a conditioned response to that sound pattern and attend to it differently than other unfamiliar sounds." In other words, the minute we're born, we may already be *biologically programmed* to like the sounds and music we were exposed to in utero.

Shrewd marketers have begun to cook up all kinds of ways to capitalize on this. For one, a few years ago, a major Asian shopping mall chain realized that since pregnant mothers spent a great deal of time shopping, the potential for "priming" these women was significant. Pregnancy, after all, is among the most primal, emotional periods in women's lives. Between the hormonal changes and the nervous anticipation of bringing another life into the world, it's also one of the times when women are most vulnerable to suggestion. So the shopping mall chain began experimenting with the unconscious power of smells and sounds. First, it began spraying Johnson & Johnson's baby powder in every area of the mall where clothing was sold. Then it infused the fragrance of cherry across areas of the mall where one could buy food and beverages. Then it started playing soothing music from the era when these women were born (in order to evoke positive memories from their own childhoods, a popular tactic you'll read more about later on).

The mall executives were hoping this would boost sales among pregnant mothers (which it did). But to everyone's surprise, it also had another far more unexpected result. A year or so into the sensory experiment, the chain began to be inundated by letters from mothers attesting to the spellbinding effect the shopping center had on their now newborns. Turns out the moment they entered the mall, their babies calmed down. If they were fussing and crying, they simmered down at once, an effect that 60 percent of these women claimed they'd experienced nowhere else, not even places where they were exposed to equally pleasant smells and sounds. After analyzing these perplexing findings, the mall management finally concluded that the baby powder and cherry scents and the comforting, soothing sounds (including these mothers' own heartbeats, the sound of children giggling, and a carefully choreographed selection of instruments and repetitive rhythms) had infiltrated the womb. As a result, a whole new generation of Asian consumers were drawn—subconsciously, of course—to that shopping mall. And though management hasn't been able to measure the long-term effects of these "primed" baby shoppers, some evidence indicates that these shopping mall experiments may have a potent effect on the shopping habits of the next generation for years to come.

You Are What Mom Eats

Pregnant women the world over know that what they consume has a profound effect on their unborn child. The typical mother-to-be kicks off the