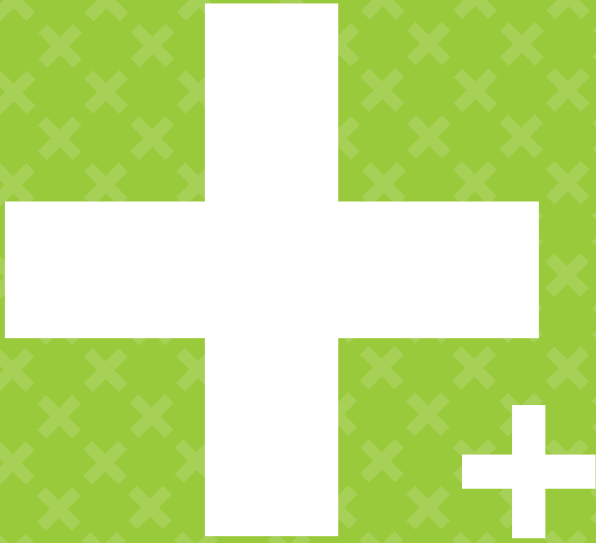


THE  
**socialbranding**  
DOGMA

**JEFF JORDAN**  
WITH THE **RESCUESCG** TEAM



**dog·ma** (dôgm(e))

n. pl. dog·mas or dog·ma·ta.

1. A doctrine or body of doctrines formally and authoritatively affirmed

# THE socialbranding<sup>®</sup> DOGMA

**JEFF JORDAN**

WITH THE RESCUESCG TEAM



## **i·den·ti·ty** n.

1. The condition or fact of being the same as a person or thing described or claimed

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**THEORY**

**1**



# PREPARE YOURSELF

CHALLENGE THE  
FOUNDATION OF  
PREVENTION





Sometimes, people do things that just don't make sense.

*“It just doesn’t make any sense. Why did she start smoking? She knows what it’s going to do to her body. She’s in college for crying out loud! She’s smart enough to know how addictive it is, so why in the world would she choose to start smoking?”*

*“I can’t believe he would do that. He knew he was drunk. He could barely walk and he thought he could drive? He’s seen the effects of drinking and driving. He knows that people could die. How could he even take that risk?”*

*“Why would they ever smoke weed? We have talked to both of them dozens of times. There are those commercials airing everyday. They know it’s illegal. They know what it could lead to. They’re smart kids, so why would they get high?”*

Because she **felt like it**,  
because he **felt like it**,  
because they **felt like it**.

Ask them. They will probably agree—they just felt like it. The world of prevention constantly faces this frustration that seems to be never-ending. Our target populations are increasingly aware of the risks of unhealthy behaviors. But despite this knowledge, the behaviors continue. It is extremely frustrating.

The nature of our work, however, is not to quit but to try harder. Despite frustration, obstacle, and adversity, we continue to reach out. We do what we do because we believe. We believe in being smoke-free, protecting our skin, going to after-school programs, drinking responsibly, exercising. We believe in growing up healthier and living better. So we continue to reach out—and we will continue until we achieve success. That success, however, is not guaranteed.

This book presents a brand new concept to challenge the source of these frustrations. The concept has emerged from the challenges repeatedly faced by those attempting to prevent underage drinking, smoking, drug use, and other behaviors which have been historically resistant to change.

And the application of this concept is not limited to preventing unhealthy behaviors. It also includes the promotion of positive behaviors beneficial to our bodies, our environment, or even our personal enrichment. While prevention will often be mentioned in examples throughout this book, the Social Branding® strategy to prevent tobacco use, for example, can be also be used to encourage exercising, reading books, or eating fruits and vegetables.

Many people who see the title of this book will no doubt assume that Social Branding® is already in practice. They may think that their own efforts already constitute Social Branding®: “Branding... that’s marketing right? Like social marketing? We do that.” Though marketing is the conceptual framework around which Social Branding® is based, more than likely it is not the kind of marketing that most people are used to.

This book presents a relatively new and innovative approach to behavior change. The Social Branding® concept is so novel that embracing it actually requires a shift in the very foundation of the prevention mindset. Even some of the individuals involved in the various Social Branding® campaigns in the U.S. are still learning the underpinnings of the strategy. It is that different. In fact, Social Branding® is so different, that acknowledgment of its novelty is necessary to understanding this book. This really is brand new.

Before reading about the Social Branding® concept, it will be necessary to clear your mind of every other prevention or intervention strategy you may believe this is similar to, related to, just like, or somewhat like. Social Branding® is based on a concept that is so different from traditional approaches that a paradigm shift is needed to embrace it. Allow those other campaigns and strategies to be set aside, and prepare yourself for this concept.

## THE SOCIAL BRANDING® CONCEPT

**WHO YOU ARE** MOTIVATES BEHAVIOR MORE POWERFULLY THAN  
**WHAT YOU KNOW.**

Perhaps it is not as radical as expected. But in our world of anti-tobacco workshops, drug prevention pamphlets, and scare-tactic filled commercials it is more radical than it first appears. This book will show you how inherently different this concept is from the underlying beliefs of the strategies used in every community, at every school, and for every population, every day.

Today’s most common approach to behavior prevention is policy. When fully supported by enforcement, policy is a powerful strategy. In tobacco prevention, policy has reduced smoking rates across the country<sup>1</sup>.

Policy, however, has its limits and even drawbacks. Continual increases in tobacco taxes, for example, could multiply the size of the tobacco black market<sup>2</sup>. The war on drugs has created an endless fight in the name of enforcement<sup>3</sup>. And regardless of the cause, someone on the other side of the issue will always be there to fight the policy —too often successfully preventing its adoption.

The second most common strategy is health education. Health education has been successful on countless occasions. In the 1980's, new information on the benefits of controlling blood pressure and cholesterol provided an opportunity to educate the public<sup>4</sup>. Health education programs were responsible for changing the behaviors of the public because previously unknown health information was successfully presented. Millions of people were affected. Today, parents are being educated about the risks of feeding their kids junk food and sugary substances<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, many will change their habits.

But when the population clearly knows the risks of a behavior and continues to choose to perform that behavior—as is obvious in the cases of cigarette smoking and drinking—the power of health education greatly diminishes.



"Click it or ticket" makes the new seatbelt law easy to remember, but is it marketing or the advertising of policy?

The third and newest approach to prevention is social marketing. Developed in the 1970's, social marketing was the solution when policy and health education failed. But today's social marketing is more accurately described as social advertising. Social marketing campaigns are primarily founded on either policy or health education principles, and advertising strategies are used to make them more appealing. Commercials use taglines like "click it or ticket" to make a new law catchy. Scary scenarios are used to make the unlikely consequences of smoking marijuana more memorable.

Social marketing has created tools to increase the reach of policy and health education campaigns in lieu of a new strategy. In fact, far from being an innovative strategy, social marketing has merely presented additional and more expensive options to execute current approaches. Unfortunately, the vision of social marketing theorists has not manifested in today's applications.

These three strategies underlie almost all prevention efforts today, but all depend on the population's rational thought process. These strategies succeed in many cases, but what about the cases where they do not succeed? Why do some people use illegal drugs despite the health and criminal consequences they are well aware of? Why do some people still smoke when they know the risk? Why do some people still drink and drive despite the increasing penalties? The simple answer is: because they feel like it. A feeling from within fuels their decisions and bypasses rational thought. More education and reasonably stricter policies are unlikely to make them stop because logical reasoning does not drive this extremely powerful feeling.

When this feeling motivates behavior to continue despite laws and taxes, or knowledge of natural risk factors, are we helpless?

Absolutely not.

We can use this very feeling to prevent behavior—but only if we understand it, acknowledge it, and believe in it ourselves.

## THE FEELING

When we describe the feeling and how it motivates every one of us, it almost sounds like a weakness or an imperfection. This feeling is like a force that motivates us to behave in ways that logically do not make sense, but it is so powerful that we consistently choose it over logic throughout our lives. Sounds scary. However, this feeling is not a weakness. On the contrary, it is part of what makes us human. It grants us a sense of individualism in the same way it confirms that we “fit in.” Without this feeling we would simply be computers processing each decision based on the objective consequences of its execution. But we are not computers. We are humans with passion, emotion, and feelings that drive many of our behaviors.

This feeling often initiates the contemplation of a behavior. A young person feels like smoking and then contemplates if she should act on that feeling. The feeling is responsible for the initial contemplation, and despite the overwhelming negative consequences, the feeling is too often more powerful than logic, successfully motivating an unhealthy behavior. Unfortunately for our educational and policy-driven programs, the feeling is based on our identity, not our knowledge of the behavior consequences. It motivates us to behave in ways that satisfy who we believe we are, whether we are alone or in a social environment.

If this feeling is so powerful, you may wonder why we have practically ignored it for decades. It is quite simple: it has been historically difficult to scientifically explain this feeling, much less utilize it in behavior-change campaigns. Researchers have explored this phenomenon in an isolated manner, with little focus on its practical application. But Social Branding® has broken this barrier by crossing multiple disciplines to scientifically explain, utilize, and evaluate use of this feeling. The relationships between this feeling, identity, and behavior will be explored later in this book, but for now we will just genuinely recognize the existence and power of this feeling.



A feeling inside motivates people to behave against reason and logic.

THIS FEELING IS THE RESULT OF A BEHAVIOR BEING ASSOCIATED WITH A “ROLE IDENTITY’S IMAGE” THAT WE EMBODY.

When this feeling prompts us to perform a certain behavior, a decision against it can cause serious discomfort and stress depending on the power of this feeling. This stress is a form of cognitive dissonance that can linger until a person changes the attitude that drives this feeling or changes their behavior. Every one of us has felt these feelings before, at one time or another, but most of us think it is normal stress or discomfort.

### FEEL THE FEELING:

Picture for a moment you purchase a shirt or blouse. One morning you decide to wear this new shirt or blouse for the first time to work. After you put it on, you look in the mirror and it feels awkward for some reason. It looks fine, the fabric is comfortable, and it is performing its function as a shirt, but it still feels awkward. You brush it off and say it feels awkward because it is your first time wearing it. You arrive at work and see your co-worker Sally:

**Sally:** Hey, how are you?

**You:** Oh fine, thanks.

**Sally:** Is that a new shirt?

**You:** Yes, I just got it.

**Sally:** Oh... I see... well, it's... interesting

**You:** Oh...

**Sally:** OK, well see you at lunch

After Sally leaves, how do you feel? If you have ever faced this situation you may have felt completely uncomfortable; you may feel like going home and changing your shirt, or even hiding from your other co-workers. There is nothing wrong with the shirt itself – it's doing what it's supposed to do. But the feeling that you are behaving in a way that does not resemble your identity, by wearing the shirt, is extremely stressful. And if you choose to be logical and not change the shirt, you may have to fight that stress all day.

If you have never experienced anything like the shirt example, there may be another instance when this feeling has caused you stress. Imagine a situation when you were performing a behavior that did not align with your identity. Maybe you drive a big, powerful pick-up truck, and one day it needed to be serviced. All day, you had to drive the family's minivan to work, and it felt like everyone in town saw you driving the minivan.

Or maybe you were given extra change at the supermarket one day, but did not notice until you got all the way back to your car. The stress to satisfy the image of the honest person who does not keep extra change may have motivated you to go all the way back in, interrupt the current customer's transaction and spend extra time on a day you were already rushed. This feeling keeps us behaving in a manner that we believe resembles our perception of current identity—our role identity's image.

The feeling is powerful and present throughout our lives. It is the result of each of us having our own identity. Everyone is somebody, with a certain image represented by certain behaviors. Many of the behaviors we wish to prevent or promote are motivated by identity. Teens smoke because it is cool or rebellious. Cool middle school students avoid dorky after-school programs, and social college students play endless drinking games. We cannot change the importance of image and identity, which will always be motivational factors, nor can we always succeed with interventions that depend on logical thinking. However, Social Branding® can rewire the relationship between identity and behavior, motivating the use of new behaviors to represent the same images.

When identity is driving a behavior, an intervention must break the association between that behavior and the identity. High school students will not stop wanting to be cool or rebellious, but we can change the behaviors they perceive as cool or rebellious. This is Social Branding®.

**SOCIAL BRANDING® IS THE PROCESS OF ASSOCIATING A CERTAIN POSITIVE BEHAVIOR WITH THE POPULATION SEGMENT'S DESIRED IDENTITY BY FOSTERING BRANDED EXPERIENCES.** A Social Branding® campaign is fundamentally different from modern interventions because it promises that behavior change will be achieved when an association between the positive behavior and the desired identity is successfully established. Unlike policy, health education, or social marketing, Social Branding® motivates change from the source of the behavior itself—the internal feeling, or desire, to behave in a certain way.

The tools of Social Branding® campaigns are very similar to the tools of modern interventions. They utilize events, street marketing, websites, materials, educators, and even some mass media. The unique underlying principle of Social Branding®, however, changes how all of these tools are utilized by making the image, not the knowledge, the priority. In fact, practically every intervention today could be considered an uncontrolled Social Branding® campaign because every interaction between the intervention and its population presents a certain image of who performs the presented behavior. Every poster, pamphlet, website, commercial, seminar, even personal interaction presents the identity of who currently performs the behavior promoted by the campaign, whether the campaign developers intended for that or not. Sometimes, the image presented can have more of an impact on behavior change than the actual message being presented. Unfortunately, when not properly controlled, this impact is sometimes opposite to the intervention's intention.



A water cooler comment can stress someone out all day.

Pictured above, Ashley Gneiting is the Experiential Brand Engineer at Rescue Social Change Group.



Without the right image, a prevention campaign may as well ask him to stop being cool.

## THE IDENTITY OF MESSAGES

Look at these two individuals. They are from two different communities, and both resemble sub-populations with higher rates for many risk-behaviors. They are the focus of many prevention campaigns.

Take a moment and imagine them on the street. You are downtown and one of them approaches you. They are dressed in their normal clothes, the same way they dress when they go out socially. They begin to speak exactly how they would to their friends. In their manner and their language, they begin to share with you a new healthy behavior.

“Hey what’s happenin’? Check it, there’s this new thing to do, it’s a straight-up remix yo, that can, like, make you healthier, you know, and...”

They suggest you change one of your behaviors to improve your health. After presenting you with this message, in their language and dressed in their style, they leave. What do you do? Do you change your behavior?

Probably not. But that’s OK. Why would you listen to them? They don’t talk like you, dress like you, act like you, so what do they know about your life and your behaviors? Why should you change your behavior for someone who probably has no idea what your life is like? Now imagine the opposite situation. Imagine yourself approaching them, dressed how you dress, speaking how you speak, and acting how you act. Why should they listen to you?

While you may not personally approach your market with your message, every single interaction with the market, whether it is an educational pamphlet or a peer counselor, carries an image. The recipient associates this image with the behavior itself, defining who currently performs the promoted behavior. If the image is completely different from their identity, behavior change is not likely to occur.

Unfortunately, too often modern campaigns simply confirm the identity-driven reasons people continue to perform risk behaviors. For example, many teenagers believe drinking represents the image of a partier who is social and has fun. Underage drinking prevention programs utilize educational materials, commercials, and even peer educators to promote sobriety, but the image of all of those efforts reflects the teenager who is more likely to see a movie on a Saturday night than party the night away. The intervention is simply confirming the belief that teens who party do drink, and teens who do not party are sober. The intervention presents an entire lifestyle, and no matter how it is verbally and visually expressed, the image does not fit. Teens will perceive that if they perform the intervention’s behavior, they will reflect an undesired identity.

Conversely, Social Branding® aims to change the behaviors associated with the identity of being, for example, a partier. A successful campaign would only appeal to those who do party and they alone would identify with the image presented. Those who do not see themselves as partiers and already stay sober would simply not be influenced by or interested in the campaign.

Social Branding® and much of its theoretical foundation comes from the practice of commercial branding. This book presents the theory and application of branding to cause positive social change, but this book is simply a translation. Commercially, branding has been utilized for decades. Some companies have established the behavioral challenges we face today using branding.

The tobacco industry was practicing branding before it was even a term by establishing, for example, that independent women smoke Virginia Slims<sup>6</sup>. The alcohol industry has successfully established drinking as the top behavior of the sports enthusiast<sup>7</sup>. Even fast food companies were once thriving from their association with the identity of the American family.

Commercial branding does not only promote risky behaviors, however. Many companies use branding to sell electronics, cars, coffee, computers, and almost every other product. Not all companies with a brand name necessarily utilize the advanced branding practices that are being presented in this book, but those who do are extremely successful. While most examples of its social application will focus on tweens, teens, and young adults, commercial branding is equally successful with every age group. Examples from readily identifiable brands like Apple, Starbucks, Volkswagen, and Nike illustrate how we can change behaviors by utilizing the factors that drive them rather than fighting those factors.

There are many misconceptions about the concepts and strategies being presented in this book. Some believe branding is the process of simply creating a logo and putting that logo on everything. Others believe advertising and marketing are one and the same. To benefit from the concepts presented in The Social Branding® Dogma, a reader should put all assumptions aside. You may disagree or have valid challenges to some of the concepts presented, but first allow only the information in this book to establish the foundation, concept, and application of Social Branding®. Using identity and desire to prevent and promote behavior has potential that is untapped, but which can be realized with the strategies presented here.

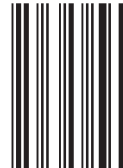
We would like to officially introduce to you, **Social Branding®**.

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