

# Brandwashed Summary

---

 [fourminutebooks.com](http://fourminutebooks.com)

**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Brandwashed* will help you make better buying decisions by identifying the psychological tools that marketers use to turn your own brain against you and make you think that you need to buy their products.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Of all the creatures in the world, you are special. There are many reasons for this, but the most remarkable is your ability to understand your own brain. We all have varying levels of this knowledge of how the mind works, but most of us don't understand it completely.

Companies, on the other hand, have a pretty good in-depth understanding of how your brain works. And unless you're a neuroscientist, they know about your mind's weaknesses better than you do.

It would be nice if they used this information for good but the sad truth is that they only utilize it to get you to buy their products. So how can you find out what they know about yourself that you don't? The answers are in Martin Lindstrom's *Brandwashed: Tricks Companies Use to Manipulate Our Minds and Persuade Us to Buy*.

Here are 3 of the most surprising lessons I got from this book:

1. Fear makes you irrational and stores use this to get you to purchase things that you don't really need.
2. Companies design their products and marketing to prey on your ability to get addicted.

3. Fake peer pressure is another of the many things that vendors create that makes you buy.

Ready to get smarter and figure out how to stop buying things you don't need? Let's find out salespeople's dirty secrets!

## Lesson 1: You **buy things we don't need because stores know how to use our fears against you.**

---

We've had fears since the times of our caveman ancestors. If they couldn't become afraid, their chances of survival plummeted. They had to move fast when a threat came along, so now our brains do the same in the right circumstances.

The amygdala is the part of the brain that fear comes from. This survival-driven fear instinct is so powerful that it even has the ability to slow down the rational thinking parts of our brain. Companies know this, and they play on it frequently.

One security company aired a commercial that utilized this mechanism perfectly. While a mother is making dinner in the kitchen, her children play outside. But the mom doesn't notice the man who is eerily watching the kids.

The scare-factor of this ad was enough to make people go out and purchase the company's security devices. **Alarm system sales shot up by 10%.** People weren't being rational about this though because the crime rate was actually going down!

Another way businesses use our fears against us is by exaggerating how afraid we are of becoming something we don't want to. They can do this by making the issues we have to deal with seem much worse than they actually are.

The allergy spray Flonase, for example, once depicted a woman with allergies having to stay inside while a party is going on outdoors. Once she buys their product, though, she gets to enjoy being outside with her family and friends.

## Lesson 2: **Addiction can happen to anyone, and companies know the process well and exploit it to get you to buy.**

---

Many of us can't live without our phones or favorite foods. You know all too well the feeling of leaving the house without your phone and feeling withdrawals bad enough that you have to go back for it. This is a classic symptom of an addiction.

One study found out the extent of the effect that young Americans cell phone use has on their brains. **When 18-25-year-olds' devices ring, the region of the brain associated with being in love lights up.** In other words, you are in love with your phone, and it's not

by chance.

Shopping, on the other hand, has these same effects but is also a little more sinister. The high we can get from making purchases releases dopamine, which gives a feeling of well-being. But this urges us to want more, so we spend more. It can be a difficult cycle to break.

Food companies know this effect well, even if you don't. That's why they load their foods with unhealthy fats and sugars. You get the same dopamine rush and next time you come back, you need more to get the same fix, so you buy more.

Research on rats addicted to food and cocaine has some alarming results. In rats hooked on food, the effects of the craving continued seven times longer than the rats with drug addictions!

Remember, companies know this and will not hesitate to use your body's ability to get addicted against you!

### **Lesson 3: You make some purchases because of fake peer pressure that vendors create.**

---

It's human nature that we like to follow what others are doing. Looking at our ancestors, this makes perfect sense. People survived better in communities, which were easier to get into if you fit in well.

We learn how to use certain items based on what we see others do with them. It's also hard for us to avoid conforming when everybody else is following a set pattern. Additionally, we tend to want what we see most people have. Research confirms all three of these truths about peer pressure.

If you look around you right now there might be products that you own that you think you just have to have. Without even knowing it you may think you need that iPhone or designer brand handbag because everybody else does.

**But these fancy items don't mean that you're unique or in fashion, it's you succumbing to businesses taking advantage of your psychology without you knowing it.**

Reviews are one of the best tools companies use to fake peer pressure. Think about the last thing you bought on Amazon, for example. Did you end up purchasing the item that had the most and highest reviews? Little did you know that up to 25% of them are fake!

We also go crazy for items on bestseller lists because we think it means they have value. It turns out that what's on the top charts doesn't come from the experts. Instead, it's whoever negotiates to pay the most to get on the top.

## Brandwashed Review

---

I've read a lot of books recently that give the sneaky tactics that you can use to get more sales, but this one was different. I really enjoyed the position that *Brandwashed* took of looking at the consumer's perspective. Recognizing how marketers use our own brains against us to buy irrationally is important if we want to save money and be happier!

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

## Who would I recommend the Brandwashed summary to?

---

The 57-year-old who has a shopping addiction and is scared of their dwindling savings, the 22-year-old student who is taking marketing courses, and anyone that wants to make more informed buying decisions.