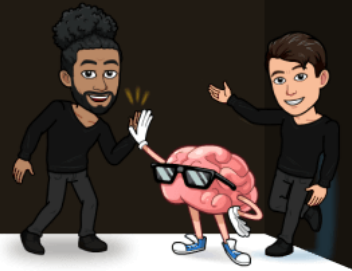


Ethics Principles Cheat Sheet

BONUS CONTENT



6 ethics principles for designing better products

Devised by Daniel Berdichevsky and Erik Neuenschwander in their paper: “[Toward an Ethics of Persuasive Technology](#),” you can see these principles as risk factors. The more of them you violate, the greater the risk the resulting product design will be ethically problematic:

1. **A product shouldn’t persuade its users to do anything that would be considered unethical if they were persuaded to do it without the product.**

For instance, persuading someone to maintain a steady heart rate throughout a workout is hard to do without any tools — but a biofeedback monitor could help to do just that. So whenever we can build a product that intervenes in persuasion opportunities that would usually be difficult to exploit, we need to be extremely thoughtful about doing so in an ethical way.

- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** Conduct a thought experiment with your product team as to whether it would be ethical for a person to attempt the persuasion your product does... without a product (similar to IRL).

2. **The creators of a product must think about and assume responsibility for all reasonably predictable outcomes of its use.**

For as long as you can reasonably predict your product’s outcomes, as a PM, Designer, or Developer, you should look to assume responsibility for those outcomes. By this principle, you shouldn’t design or further develop a product that encourages people to smoke more, knowing the consequences of smoking to a person’s health.

- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** Write a list of outcomes for the user of your product and consider them deeply amongst your peers.

3. **The creators of a product must uphold the privacy of users with at least as much respect as they regard their own privacy.**

Although there was no mention of privacy, nor was it likely to be the exclusive reason if it even was one — it’s worth noting that [Steve Jobs admitted in 2011](#) that “we limit how much

technology our kids use at home” and that they had not used the then recently released iPad.

- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** Ask yourself if you are completely comfortable using your product regarding your privacy. If you feel even a slight sense of anxiety, locate where this lies and fix it immediately.

4. A product that passes on personal information about a user to a third party must be closely scrutinized for privacy concerns.

Whenever you share customer data with third parties, it's essential to take steps to ensure that privacy is not put at risk.

- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** Ensuring there is proper due diligence done on the vendors you partner with, sharing only the data that is absolutely necessary for the third party to perform their functions, and implementing role-based access controls and encryption can help to protect sensitive data.

5. A product must not misinform customers in order to achieve its persuasive end.

An example of this would be [privacy washing](#) — the act of pretending to protect privacy (while not doing so). When you tap the "Ask App Not To Track" dialog prompt that appears in a lot of apps... it's not really doing what you'd expect. Advertisers simply use fingerprinting instead of Apple's traditional IDFA to map your data and send it to advertisers. And iPhone's tracking protections are not as reliable as Apple's ads might suggest, [according to investigations](#). Therefore, they misinform customers whilst allowing products like Threads ([read our case study on it](#)) to harvest user data as they use the app to view content.

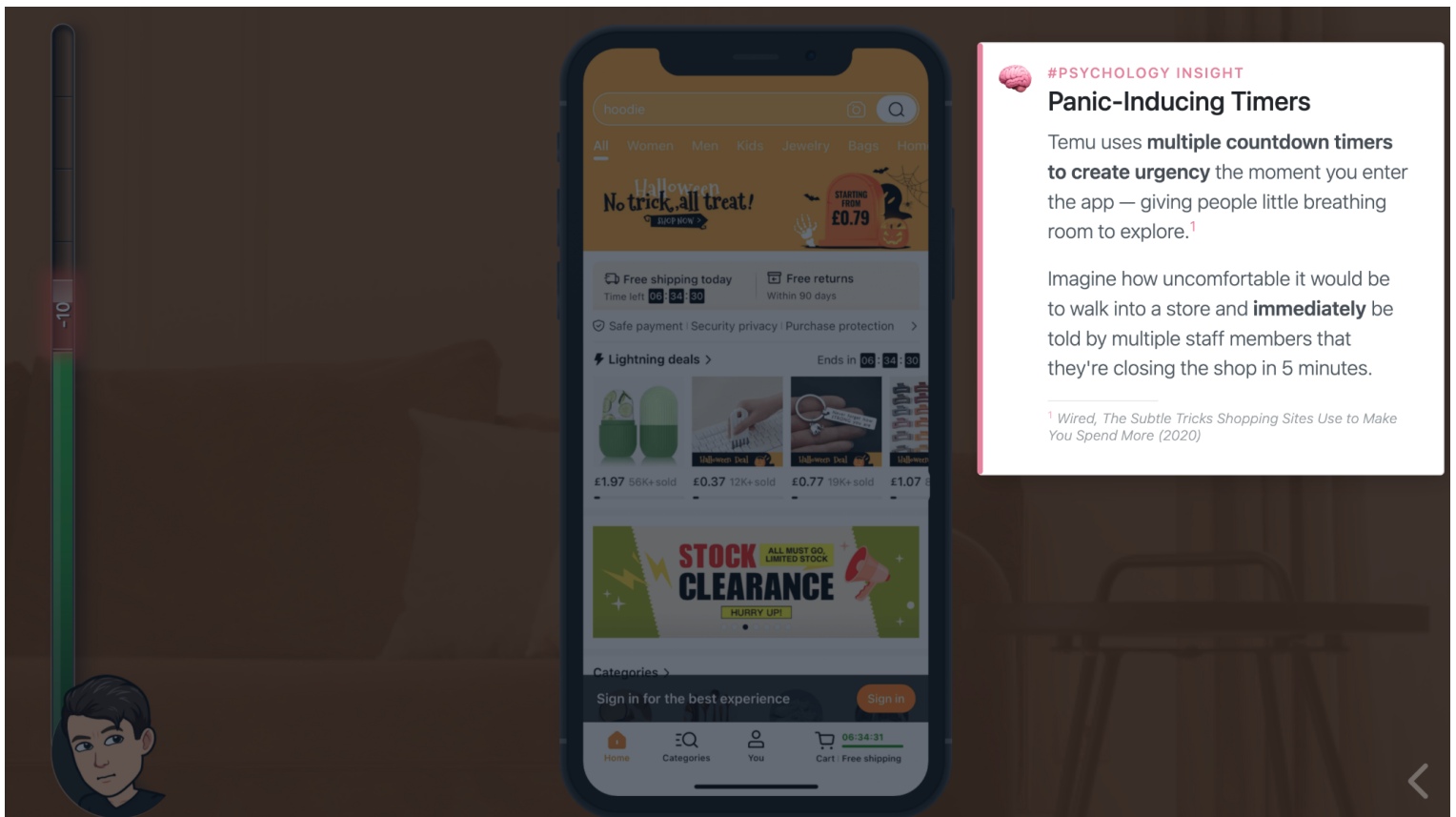
- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** Find ways to clearly disclose your true motivations, methods, and intended outcomes by a customer using your product.

6. The creators of a product should never look to persuade a user to do something they themselves would not consent to be persuaded to do.

This is the golden rule.

- ☐ ⚡ **Apply:** A helpful and practical application of this would be to imagine creating guidelines for persuading without knowing whether you were the persuader or the one being persuaded; you would want to make sure the persuasion would benefit both sides — in case you turned out to be the person being persuaded.

5 Psychology + UX Insights from the Temu case study



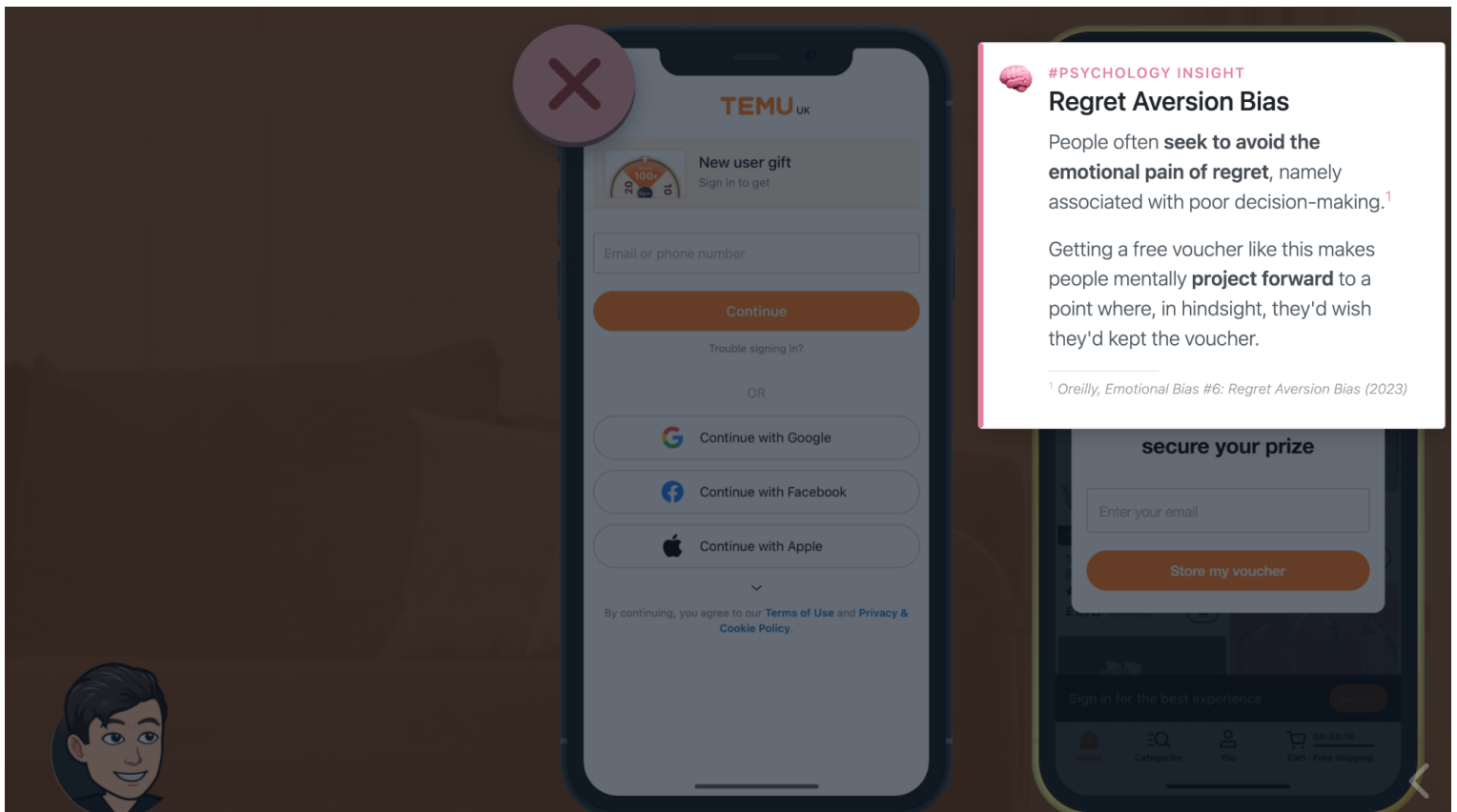
#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

Panic-Inducing Timers

Temu uses **multiple countdown timers to create urgency** the moment you enter the app — giving people little breathing room to explore.¹

Imagine how uncomfortable it would be to walk into a store and **immediately** be told by multiple staff members that they're closing the shop in 5 minutes.

¹ Wired, *The Subtle Tricks Shopping Sites Use to Make You Spend More* (2020)



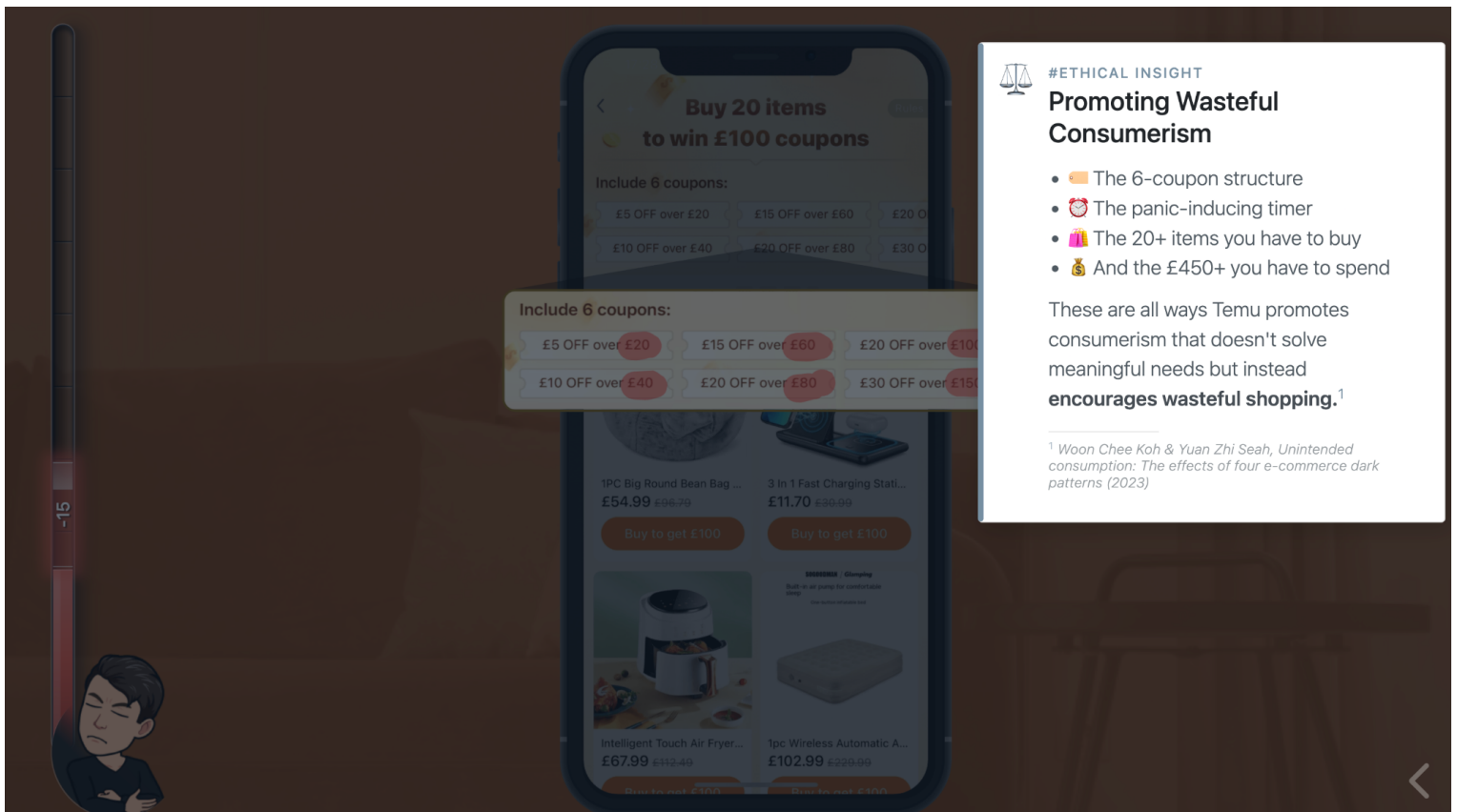
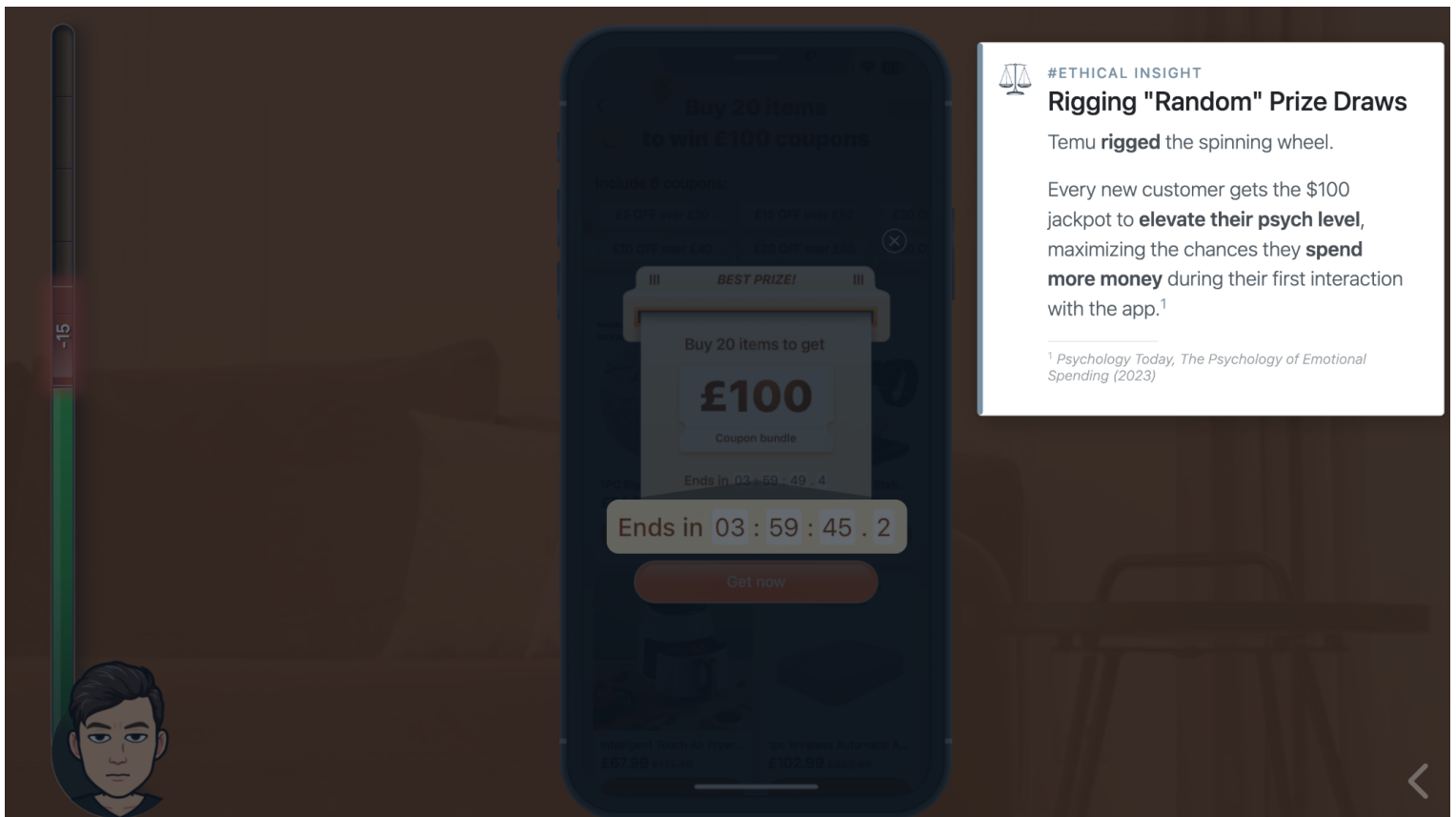
#PSYCHOLOGY INSIGHT

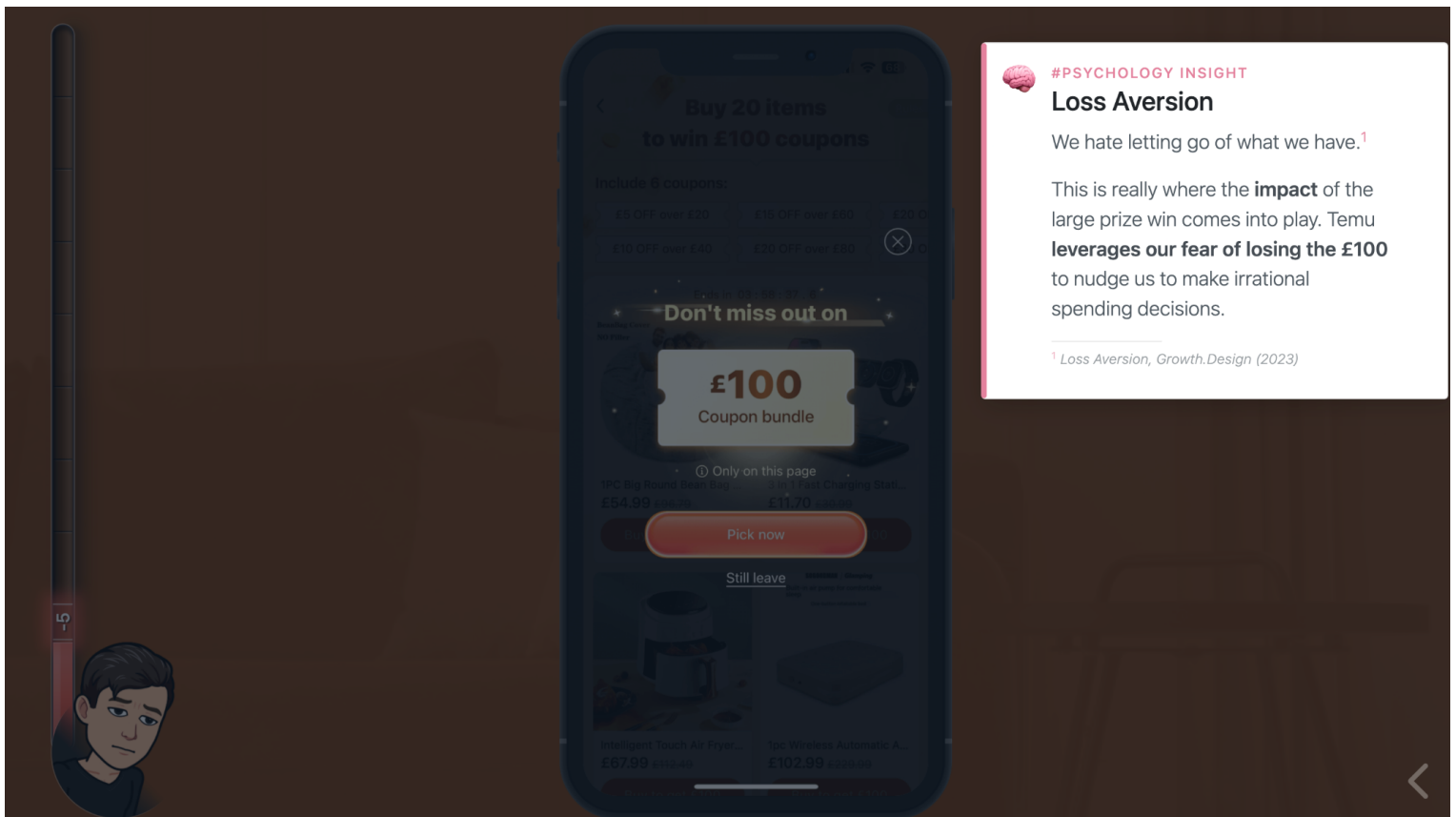
Regret Aversion Bias

People often **seek to avoid the emotional pain of regret**, namely associated with poor decision-making.¹

Getting a free voucher like this makes people mentally **project forward** to a point where, in hindsight, they'd wish they'd kept the voucher.

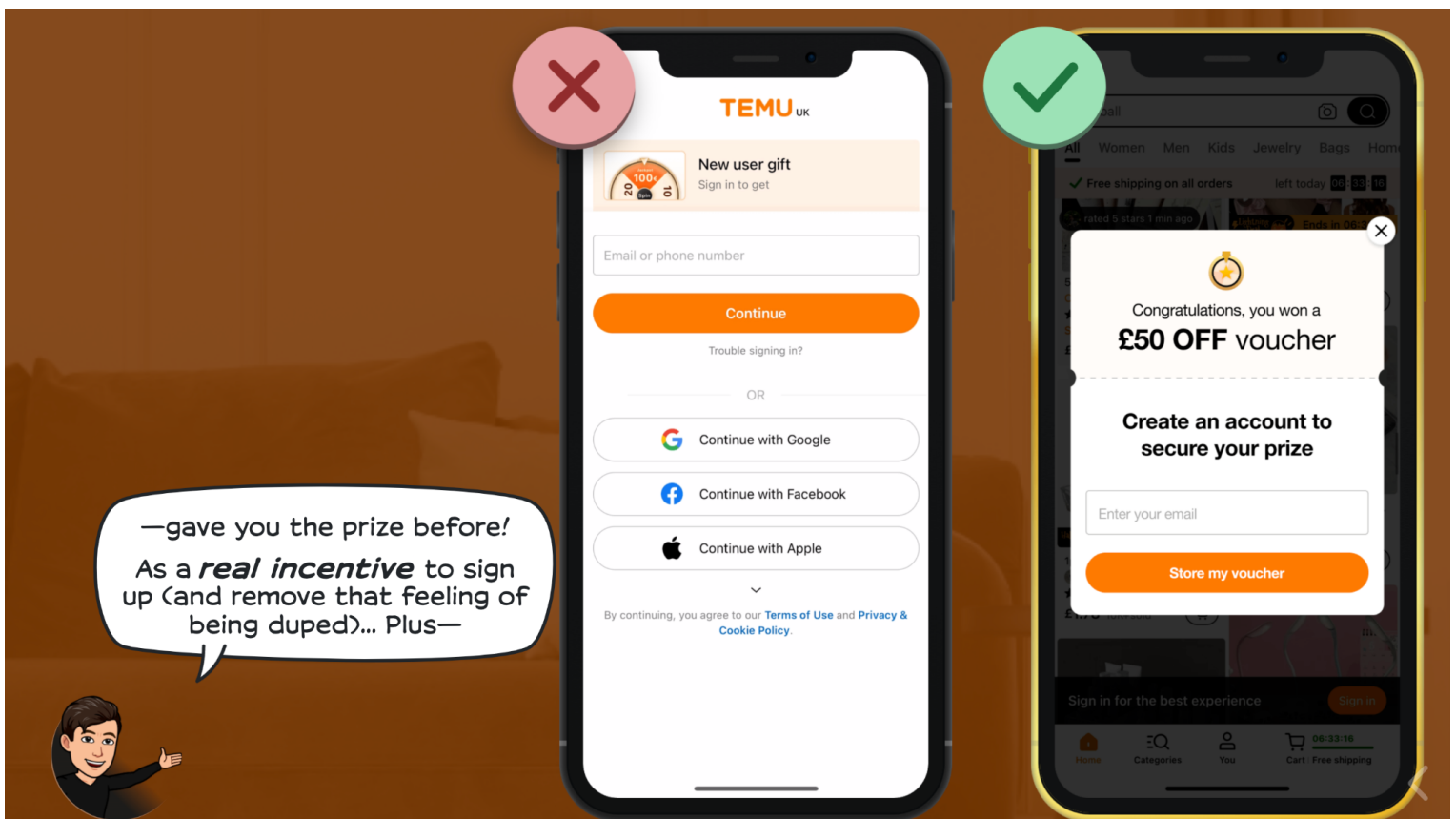
¹ O'Reilly, *Emotional Bias #6: Regret Aversion Bias* (2023)





The Redesign

If you're looking for inspiration



Want to use psychology to build better products?

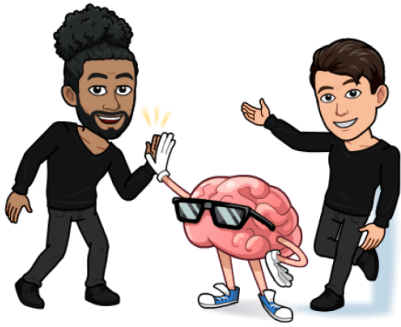
If you're looking for more ways to sharpen your product skills using psychology, check these out:



Product Psychology Course.

If you want to learn how to use psychology to create better experiences for your customers, check out our course:

<https://growth.design/course>



Cognitive Biases Cheatsheet.

100+ cognitive biases and design principles that affect your product experiences. Tons of product examples, tips, and checklists to improve your user experience:

<https://growth.design/psychology>

—Dan Benoni & Louis-Xavier Lavallée



Exercises.

Level up your product skills with bite-sized exercises to do on your phone every week:

<https://growth.design/exercises>

—Dan Benoni & Louis-Xavier Lavallée