

"Self Esteem & Purchasing Behavior"

Part II

(One of Several Audios in Your Series of FREE Marketing Research Trainings from Drs. Glenn & Sharon Livingston)

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Dr. Glenn Livingston: Hi Sharon, honey.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Hi, honey.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Well, I want everybody to know that Sharon and I just did a terrific recording and went through the whole thing...

Dr. Sharon Livingston: We did a terrific talk, we just didn't record it.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: {chuckles} We thought it was recording and then we looked up at the computer screen and it was not recording.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It wasn't there.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Anyway, the reason that we wanted to do this was because a few weeks ago we recorded an audio about how self-esteem was related to purchase behavior.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It was on laddering, specifically. We talked about laddering.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Uh-huh, laddering being.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: A technique to get from a product feature to functional benefits and then to emotional end benefits. One of the things that I felt was missing from it was a good summation about the ultimate end benefits, which is self esteem and what we did a number of years ago, was come up with a paradigm. We call it the *Livingston Paradigm of Self Esteem*, which shows that there are four pillars of self-esteem. The reason for self-esteem is that the ultimate end benefit of any ladder is enhance self-esteem. In other words, the only reason that we're doing something is because in some way, it makes us feel better about ourselves.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right. I want to interrupt for one second and then I want to get you to go into detail about each of those four pillars because I think that's what's most important for people.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: First of all, in terms of the ladder, Sharon, *why* did you buy those knitting needles?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, I went into a store that I trusted and I think that was kind of interesting also, that that was an important part of it, that is was a trust source. That would be another ladder to pursue.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: From a trusted source could have been a feature that we could have done a ladder on to find the ultimate end benefit.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Probably would have been something like it feels safe or secure or something like that.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: We could do the ladder and see where it goes, but what we said was that they were steel points and they were very smooth. So take me through the ladder, go ahead.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So you're sitting here with these knitting needles and you bought them from a trusted source and they had steel points that were very smooth.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay and what's good about having knitting needles that have steel points that are very smooth?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It allows the yarn to go over them easily.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Why is that important?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: That allows me to go faster.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Why is it important to go fast when you're knitting?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, there's an excitement about seeing the finished product and the faster that I go, the quicker I get to see how these beautiful yarns turn into the thing that I'm creating.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I see. What's the benefit of feeling excited about the end result?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, then I get this wonderful sense of accomplishment that I've created this beautiful scarf, or shall, or sweater or whatever it is.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Oh, I see.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: I get to see it accomplished.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Wonderful. What's the benefit of feeling accomplished?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Makes me feel terrific. I feel good about myself.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Makes you feel good about yourself, okay.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: You already know because of our tremendous experience in this, that accomplishment is an emotional end benefit. Other people might not have know that, so they would have had to continue until they got to, I feel good about myself. I feel confident. My self worth is enhanced. I have better self-esteem.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So you want to keep going until you get there and then the emotional end benefit is the thing just before.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right. Now, having said that I've been doing this for so many years that I recognize the emotional end benefits. I mean, we have a long list of them, so I don't have to take it all the way to enhance self-esteem, because I know what they are.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right, but if you're teaching then you want people to go there.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Yes, and just for no other reason but to prove to themselves that that's what happens.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Uh-huh.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: You will always get to enhance self-esteem.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I want to point out a couple of things, why I think this is so important.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Just to make sure people are paying attention to the right thing.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Sure.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: And can get excited about it. Let's look at the big picture, rather than framing marketing as finding a way to communicate the solution for a problem, when certainly it is. We're looking for something that gives us a lot more dimension and richness to craft persuasive communication.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: If all I knew was that you were trying to solve the problem of knitting faster, I might find out that the smooth knitting needles fit that solution, but I really wouldn't know what the mood and the tone of that advertisement should be. That would have to do with getting excited and accomplished and all of the images and context that I could place around that, now that I know those emotions. The second thing is, when you work from a feature connected to its natural end emotional benefits, you're putting yourself in a position where you can use emotional logic. Now most people when they think of emotional marketing, they think; Oh, I'm going to sell with attitude. I'm just going to plug in some emotional hot buttons and that's going to get people to buy my stuff and we've got a whole series of CDs on why that's a big problem. Look at a lot of the *Super Bowl* commercials or anything, they are all very emotional, but you hardly know what the commercial was for and they don't necessarily stimulate sales. So this really creates a direct link between specific features and especially when there's features that are points of difference to your brand.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: If you've got features and functions that nobody else has, well, when you can ladder those up to the emotional end benefits then you can sell with attitude. You can sell with attitude that is logically connected to your point of difference.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: There's different kinds of attitudes to you point and that's how we came up with this paradigm of self-esteem. There are four aspects to it. There are two that are highly charging and get people all hyped up to try something. They create trial.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: There are two others that are all about more traditional, the shoulds and doing the right thing and those create repeat. And so, the best campaigns have an aspect of emotional end benefits that ladder up to excitement and trial, as well as, something that makes people want to buy again.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Just like a really healthy balanced person will have a combination of id ego and super ego.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well yeah, let's talk about that a little.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I'm actually just kind of restating what you were saying about brands and advertising from my background as a clinical psychologist, that it's important for us to feel well balanced. That we recognize and accept our desires, the monsters of the id so to speak.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: You know what, before you go there, you're still remembering the last interview.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: I don't think we set it up well enough for people to go there, but we can come back there.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Where that came from was when we were talking about the highly charging ones. The first two categories have to do a lot with self and things that are about gratification, immediate gratification. So, the first category is what we call healthy narcissism. What I mean by that, there are important ways when you are becoming yourself and you're getting to know who you are that it's good, what Glenn just did with me about the needles, laddered up to accomplishment. The accomplishment is one of the emotional end benefits that you find in the category of healthy narcissism. What you'd also find there are things like; I'm creative, I'm productive, I'm financially successful, I'm healthy, I'm free, I'm independent, I have integrity, I'm in control. Things like that that are all about me, me, me, me, me. Me in the world with myself. Ways that I feel proud of myself, good about myself.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So what you're saying now is that after having done thousands of these ladders and looked at all the emotional end benefits that motivate purchase across different categories.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Mmhmm.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: You're saying that you've found that there's like these four categories and one of the main ones is what you described as healthy narcissism.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Yeah and narcissism very often has a negative connotation, but in fact in order to be a healthy human being, we have to take care of ourselves and be excited about who we are and find things that are really gratifying. Accomplishment is not just gratifying, it's also satisfying, it's more long term it's not just short term. The second category that's highly charged and gets us all excited, which I'm sure won't surprise anybody is love/sex. That's having an important passionate connection with another person. I call it love/sex but it even could be with a very good friend. But mostly, it's more about a significant other. So, I feel good about myself because I'm loved by someone who's really important to me. I look pretty to my husband. If I do things that make me look pretty to my husband, then I'll get my feet rubbed, get kisses

and hugs, he'll be attached to me, he'll give to me. The same way around with men with his significant other. So, all of those get us all riled up and we want those very badly, the healthy narcissism and the love/sex. Because of them, when product features ladder up to either one of those two categories, they're likely to create trial. We get all excited about them.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Gotcha.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: We want to do it. That's what you were talking about before with the id, like the impulses. They speak to our impulses and things that we want. Categories three and four are more about traditional kinds of things. The shoulds of society. So, category three is about nurturance, and nurturance has to do with being a good mother, a good dog owner, a good teacher, a good boss. Very often things for example that save time and money ladder up to nurturance. If you ask a woman, what's the benefit of saving time, she'll say to you. Well, then I have more time to be with my family. What's the benefit of that? We get to go to the movies. What's the benefit of that? The kids have a great time. What's the benefit of that? They tell me they love me. So the same thing with saving money. Dad will say, or a mom will say, or the boss will say. I save money, therefore, I can give my employee a bonus at the end of the year and I get appreciation for being a good employer. I save money, I can get the kids that toy they wanted, I get a lot of mother appreciation. Category four, is altruism, that's about giving back to society, being charitable, leaving a legacy like *Stephan Covey* would say. Not contributing to the landfill, avoiding disposable products and these are the things we should do. It's doing the right thing. But, what's important about them, they might not get trial, but they get repeat. For example, I've given this example many, many times. I might have even said it in the first one that's why I was just hesitating but with panty hose, the idea of the glimmer and the shimmer and that real fine, sheer stocking was very attractive and made women feel powerful and sexy and all that kind of stuff. But, after many, many years of having runs and not only does a run waste a lot of money, but in addition, if you're walking down the street with a run in your hose and someone's looking at your legs, they don't look very attractive. So it takes away from category one and two. So the panty hose industry came out with a solution, which was to create tights and opaque stockings and that whole industry died because tights were being priced at the same price as sheer stockings and tights last forever. Sheers would run, like the first or second time they were worn, unless you were extraordinarily careful and anything but someone who was rough on their clothes. So when got smart and started buying tights and dress makers and fashion designers started creating styles where women could look formal in opaque hose. So they didn't have to wear panty hose or sheer stockings anymore. So they got the look, plus the durability and durability almost always leads to nurturance or altruism. So when you can look sexy, categories one and two and get durability, categories three and four.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: That's how you can own a category.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yeah.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: That's it. I mean one of the things that a lot of the panty hose companies did to try to recoup was to create a sheer look with more durability, but they've never ever really been able to bring that back. We used to work for *Saralee Hosiery* and the whole department collapsed as you remember, because they were missing it.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I do. I would like to summarize what I think I heard you say.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Ask me if you think I'm correct in that I think it would be wonderful, since you happen to have all of this experience working for hundreds of different brands, if you could think of one or two examples of a few brands that do that well, across all four categories. I think to put it as simply as possible, what we're saying here is that people buy stuff because it makes them feel good. It makes them feel good about themselves or it just makes them feel better emotionally and that's a different way of looking at things then saying that people buy things because they solve a problem. Although, there's a lot of overlap.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: You have to have a feature connected to an emotional end benefit. You can't just have an emotional end benefit without an important feature.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right, now that's the second thing that we're talking about, is that in order for feelings good to be connected to purchase and really motivate purchase, it's got to be specifically connected to a feature and especially a point of difference.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right, although sometimes if there are identical features, if someone gets smart enough to recognize what the emotional end benefit is.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yes.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: And talk about it, they can steal it.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yes, like what was it *Schlitz* beer? I'm thinking about that classic story.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: The first beer company that, every beer was predominantly a pure beer, made with pure ingredients. But the first company that really recognized that that was a very strong motivator. Then as you dimensionalize it by describing how they dug to the deepest wells to get the purest water, how they had the finest hops and really painted a picture, really owned the emotional motivation in that category. That becomes

difficult when all the other brands have the same features, what are they going to do. Say, well we do that too.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: But the mind works, first to mind is usually first to market.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: So okay, people buy stuff because it makes them feel good about themselves or makes them feel good. It's powerful when you can connect features and functions of your product to what makes people feel good about themselves.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: There's a group of good feelings that you've come to understand after having done thousands of interviews on ladders.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: There's a list of 37 emotional benefits, which people can find on your site, www.tlgonline.com.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Right, we've called it down to like 37 out of 600 or something like that.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Yeah, we did a bunch of statistical tests. But what's even more important than that is that you can take those 37 emotional benefits and classify them into four categories. What you're saying is that you've seen the most successful brands have a strong connection to at least one emotional benefit in each of the four categories. Is that correct?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: One from categories one and two and one from categories three and four.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Oh ok, so it doesn't have to a benefit from every category?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: No, the ones that create trial, the highly charged, exciting and categories three and four are the ones that create repeat.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Right.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: So you want to have trial and repeat.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Got it, okay. So category one is healthy narcissism. Category two is love/sex. Category three is nurturance and category four is giving back to society or altruism.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Correct.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay, well did I give you enough time to think of an example.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Well, I was thinking about the story I was saying about my friend Eileen and dark chocolate.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Think about this whole resurgence of healthy interests. People want to do the right thing and nurture themselves appropriately. Nurture their kids appropriately.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Can I ask you a question?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: If you're nurturing yourself, is that category three or category one?

Dr. Sharon Livingston: It's a little bit of both, kind of cool, right?

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Because very often moms will justify nurturing themselves by nurturing their children.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: I see.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: But I think that if you see self as other, then nurturance counts, because you're doing the right thing. You can count self as the other in that sense. So Eileen is an admitted chocoholic. In the past year or so, she has made a concerted effort to switch over to dark chocolate and she'll look for the ones with like 87% chocolate or *CoCal* and less sugar. So she still gets her chocolate hit, but she does it in a healthy way. That's a whole set of products, I mean there's one, *Taguba*. That's expensive and chocolate lovers around the world really fancy it and it's doing very, very well. There have been other brands who have been copying it. I think *Taguba* was one of the first to come out with this dark chocolate. They've got interesting flavors and so they create the excitement and all that charge, but they also create repeat because it's good for you. That kind of thing.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Got it.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Just to recap, laddering is a way of going from a feature to a functional benefit to an emotional end benefit. You know you got to the end, particularly if you're inexperienced with the technique, when someone says, finally, I feel good about myself. It enhances my self-esteem. I'm confident. Confident sounds like a separate benefit, but it really isn't. It's just another way of saying I feel good about myself. The thing before any of those is the emotional end benefit. We have a list of 37 of them on my website www.tlgonline.com. If you look through the article section on laddering, you'll find that list. There are the four pillars of self-esteem; healthy narcissism, love/sex, nurturance and giving back to society or altruism. The top two, categories one and two lead to trial, they are things that are highly charged. The bottom two, lead to repeat. Any good campaign incorporates features that ladder up to something from either category one and two and something from either category three and four. Because you want to get to trial and you want to get repeat. That's it in a nutshell.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Okay, that's really great.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Thank you.

Dr. Glenn Livingston: Thanks Darling.

Dr. Sharon Livingston: Okay.

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