

# USING MARKETING FOR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

presentation by  
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to  
Frank Fenner Foundation  
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## [TITLE SLIDE]

Thank you and welcome everyone to this evening's discussion.

Before I begin, I wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting, the Ngunnawal people.

I wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

I would also like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending today's event.

We might find it useful to draw upon their wisdom during the course of our discussions today and afterwards

## [SLIDE]

[outline of program]

## [SLIDE] – INTRODUCTION

## [SLIDE] – ABOUT ME

## [SLIDE] - FFF

'The Frank Fenner Foundation is a catalyst for social change to bring about biosensitive societies which satisfy the needs of humankind and the Earth's ecosystems of which we are a part.

'FFF stands for biosensitive societies that manifest an understanding of and respect for the processes of life upon which we are entirely dependent.'

But *how* to be that catalyst and foster that understanding and respect seems to have proven to be a stumbling block – until now.

Late in 2014 there was renewed interest in the Foundation about the practicalities of catalysing change.

In today's meeting, I am aiming to spur the Foundation – and everyone here – into practical discussion about how cultural transformation might be effected, how we might be a catalyst for the social change necessary for humans to survive and thrive into the future.

I will draw on traditional fairytales, marketing, and practical empowerment movements, to introduce one model to help stimulate discussion, creative thinking and research that is oriented towards the practicalities of change.

Our discussion will focus on developing alternative images, stories and language that might replace the ones that currently dominate our world.

**[SLIDE] – Assumptions**

It's helpful for discussions about catalysing the social changes needed if we make a couple of assumptions to help us move forward in working on the practicalities of helping our societies to become biosensitive

Here are a couple I borrowed from Human Ecology Forum:

1 Transformation of the current dominant world culture, including its worldview and practices, is imperative to protect human civilisation. This transformation will need to reassert the biophysical realities within which we live and promote a culture which is sensitive to and respects nature and its limits.

2 While a rapid transformation is required to protect human civilisation, there is still time to take effective action to minimise disruption to human society.

Further we do not want to spend time dwelling on the present situation except in so far as some analysis of the current situation helps understanding of the suggestions and recommendations for change... and we'll need to do some of that today.

**[SLIDE] - Shifting How We (FFF) Think**

To be effective catalysts for societal change, at least some of us will need to change our thinking from a focus on theoretical models and academic discussion to a much more practical focus: how we might effect change.

That might take some of us out of our comfort zones. Where we may be comfortable exercising our skills in analysis, theorising, and scientific method We may need to engage a little more with our creative, artistic sides.

Previous sessions have looked at some models for change. But we have yet to really make much progress in the practical discussion: *how* we go about effecting change. *How* might we bring about the cultural transformation necessary to ensure the long term survival of the human species? And that's what I'm hoping to spur on today.

**[SLIDE]**

First, a quick look at culture and communication.

**[SLIDE]**

No matter how you define it, culture is about communication.

Culture is our way of life  
and it's passed from person to person,  
from one generation to another  
by communication.

It's about *what* we communicate and *how* we communicate it.  
And that communication may be verbal or non-verbal.

And the emotions we attach to communication help give it meaning.

**[SLIDE]**

Culture is largely the narratives,  
the stories we tell ourselves.

Those stories help us to make sense of the world, our experiences and ourselves.  
Eventually they become our identity.

But new stories can replace current stories.  
For humans to survive and thrive in the face of ecological crises –  
particularly climate change – we will need new stories  
And those stories will need to be about what is *needed*,  
not what is seen as 'possible' within our current culture.

And we know that it can be done,  
Because it's been done in the past...  
And I'll come back to that later.

**[SLIDE]**

Now I'd like to look at how advertising and marketing effect change.

**[SLIDE] – Effecting change**

There is quite a body of work on how to go about effecting change...  
For example,

A lot comes out of psychology,

More comes out of advertising and marketing

And quite a bit has come out of project management and campaigning, including  
grass roots campaigning.

A lot of people work professionally in the field,  
and there's a lot of research – much of it published –  
and there's a lot of experience that's shared via a variety of avenues.

In this talk, I am going to focus on how advertising and marketing might help us  
catalyse social change to bring about biosensitive societies.

**[SLIDE] – Why advertisers & marketers?**

Why should we pay attention to advertisers and marketers?

Well, because:

They are in the change industry – effecting change is their bread and butter.

They use psychology to influence behaviour and thinking.  
Their work is evidence-based.  
They are creative.

And they can be *very* effective.

**[SLIDE] – Shaping public opinion**

But not necessarily for the greater good.

The campaigns of both the tobacco industry and the fossil fuel industry come to mind.

They set out to, in their own words,  
“develop a message and strategy for shaping public opinion on a national scale”  
And it has worked – spectacularly.

As Al Gore has pointed out:

‘This manufactured campaign found a receptive audience among many citizens who would understandably prefer not to acknowledge the existence of such a frightening and potentially overwhelming threat as global climate change.’

It is important to note here that these campaigns made use of experts, commercial marketing experts.

**[SLIDE] - books**

**Social marketing** is the branch of advertising and marketing that can best help us. To quote that trust source, Wikipedia, it ‘seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviors that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good.’

There’s quite a body of work in social marketing, although it’s nowhere near as big as that for advertising and marketing in general.

Here are some books from the University of Canberra library –

They look very good but I haven’t read them yet...

and they’re probably a too detailed for this session.

So I thought I’d just stick with a couple of things with which I am familiar.

**[SLIDE] – What can we learn from the commercial world?**

So, what can we learn from the commercial world that might help us in our efforts to replace the stories, images, language and thinking that is causing so much harm that civilisation, and indeed life as we know it, is threatened?

The commercial world offers practical models of behavioural and cultural change.

We can learn from it about the psychology of changing behaviour and models for influencing people.

Today we will look at a basic model of facilitating that change  
And then look at how it might be applied to effect cultural transformation.

**[SLIDE] – Silver book cover**

I am finding this new book very useful, so good that I bought a copy.

The book gives both excellent overview and detail of the interaction between the science of psychology and the art of advertising, including key research.

**[SLIDE] – Adam**

It was written by Adam Ferrier.

Adam is a registered psychologist who is now a very successful advertiser.

You may have seen him on Gruen Transfer, where he is a regular guest panelist.

Adam wrote ‘The Advertising Effect’ because he wants to stop *mindless* consumption. (He wants it to change to *mindful* consumption, but that’s another story.)

**[SLIDE] – Advertising, psychology & systems thinking**

Now a brief look at what advertising, psychology and systems thinking bring to the table.

First, I’d like to introduce you to the *mere exposure* effect.

You may be familiar with the idea that our brains have a filter, so we can concentrate on the things that matter most to us. But that seems to me to relate only to the conscious brain, that part that we use for active thinking.

The idea that everything our senses pick up makes an impression on our brains has been demonstrated by Zajonc in what he called the ‘mere exposure effect’: we like something simply because it is more familiar to us – whether or not we are aware of it.

Zajonc, R. B. 2001. Mere exposure: A gateway to the subliminal. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(6): 224-8

Every time we see an ad it makes an impression on the brain  
Heath, R. F. 2001. *The Hidden Power of Advertising*. Admap Monograph no. 7, Helney-on-Thames: Warc

From that, we can deduce that every time we see a picture, hear a story or read words, it makes an impression on our brains.

In fact, the more we are exposed to something, generally the more we will like it, *even if we do not develop any specific beliefs about it*.

That’s the mere exposure effect.

Perner, L. Attitudes. [http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb\\_Attitudes.html](http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb_Attitudes.html), viewed 17 February 2015.

I think that is critical to what is driving our culture and how cultural transformation might be effected.

We can apply that knowledge,  
the mere exposure effect,  
to our work to catalyse the social changes needed to bring about biosensitive societies that can survive and thrive into the future.

- 1 We can look at what the dominant images, stories and words are in our culture.
- 2 Then we can work out what we want to replace them with and
- 3 how we might go about that replacement.

**[SLIDE] – Effecting change**

**[SLIDE] – Some ways of getting change**

First let's look at some ways of getting change.

According to George Laycock, there is only 1 story: the journey – with a Hero, Villain, Direction, Outcome

We're all familiar with fairy tales.  
You know, someone (usually a young female) gets into trouble – usually the Villain wrongs the Victim  
and then someone else (Hero, usually a handsome young man) rescues them (the Victim),  
sometimes with help (Fairy Godmothers, dwarves) - Direction,  
then they usually get married and  
they always live happily ever after (Outcome).

That's a powerful story,  
And it could be argued that it's dominant in our society.  
Someone (or something) stronger, smarter, more powerful than us  
will rescue us from the trouble we're in...

It's the ultimate outsourcing, especially when big cultural change is needed.

And it's well established in the cultural and political spheres...

Examples in recent times include

Whitlam, Rudd, Obama, Abbott, technology

Some have fared better than others

But the basic story is still being used.

Some recent examples are Tony Abbott in the lead-up to the last election (although that hasn't been working so well since the election)

And the belief that technology will save us from catastrophic climate change and other environmental catastrophes.

I would argue that the fairy tale narrative suits incumbent power elites,  
And inspirational leadership and crisis opportunities that Bob Douglas, after his visit to Cuba, thought necessary for radical cultural transformation.

But there are some problems with the fairy tale approach to change:  
We never find out how the hero does it (although Shrek does give a less rosy picture)  
And it doesn't fundamentally change the culture of Victim as helpless.

Also, in the environment movement and academia we have a lot of:

- stories about bad things (eg climate change)
- stories about victims, who are helpless (often us, eg climate change)

So we are both victim and villain.

This sets up an internal conflict that can't be resolved

So we put it in the 'too hard' basket

Then we have the empowerment movements

These aim to put powerful cultural and practical change in the hands of ordinary people...

We have seen them before and they can lead to cultural transformation (eg Magna Carta, end of Chinese dynasties, revolutions, female vote, equality – which has a way to go).

Some recent examples are

March Australia – has empowered Australians to speak up

Kitchen Table Conversations – empowers people to speak up & feed their views into political processes.

Now March Australia and KTC joining together.

Divestment – empowers people to take action. Symbolic but effective –

we can see that with what happened with apartheid in S Africa and with what is happening now with fossil fuels.

But will these empowerment movements lead to cultural transformation of the scale & depth needed for the dominant culture to become biosensitive

(i.e. live within the limits of Earth)?

And then we have marketing that deliberately sets out to change behaviour.

Today I'll be specifically introducing you to one marketing model and how it might be used for transforming culture.

And the reason for that is because deep and widespread cultural transformation only occurs when

- . People's behaviour changes
- . People's thinking (their frame) changes.

### **[SLIDE] – Psychology of behaviour**

But how *do* people's behaviour and thinking change?

Two major models describe how this can happen.

They're based on a powerful psychological loop where thoughts influence feelings which in turn influence actions, and the net result is your behaviour..

### **[SLIDE] – Change – how?**

In the first model of change, we need to change our thinking in order to change our behaviour.

This is the basis of cognitive part of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

This is probably the way you have been approaching the issue of catalysing the social changes to bring about biosensitive societies.

It seems logical to be interested in what people think, why they do things, their attitudes  
–and think that that when they get those things right, then they will behave the right way.

**[SLIDE] - Change thinking → change actions**

In fact, that is the basic model of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy:  
by changing our thoughts we change our feelings which leads to a change in our actions and our net behaviour.

It takes time, and,  
although CBT has been demonstrated to be effective for the treatment of a variety of conditions,  
it is not a cure-all and there are no guarantees that behaviour will change.

**[SLIDE] – Change – how?**

There is second model, though, in which we take the exact opposite approach.

**[SLIDE] - Change actions → change thinking**

In this model, we change our *behaviour* in order to change our thinking.

It works because of cognitive dissonance.

We like our thoughts, feelings and actions to be aligned.  
When they're not, we feel uncomfortable.  
That mental discomfort of holding two contradictory beliefs or ideas at the same time was called cognitive dissonance by psychologist Leon Festinger in 1957.

It's particularly evident in situations where an individual's behaviour, their actions conflicts with beliefs that are integral to his or her self-identity.

[Cherry, K. What is cognitive dissonance?  
<http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/f/dissonance.htm>, viewed 17 February 2015.]

When we feel cognitive dissonance, we make changes so that our thoughts, feelings and actions become aligned.

So, just as changing our thoughts and feelings can change our actions,  
Changing our actions can change our thoughts and feelings.

**[SLIDE] – Why focus on behaviour?**

In fact, 'there's growing evidence that action is the most important lever to pull when changing behaviour'.

[Ferrier, A. 2014, *The Advertising Effect*. Oxford University Press: Melbourne.]



The evidence says  
that action changes attitude  
faster than  
attitude changes action.

Now, just park that in your brain for a while.  
And we'll look at some ways we can get change and some of the evidence that comes  
out of marketing.

**[SLIDE] – 6 principles of influence**

Robert Cialdini, Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona  
State University

has been possibly the key researcher on the 'how' of influencing people to act.  
He published his Six Principles of Influence (also known as the Six Weapons of  
Influence)  
in his seminal and best-selling 1984 book "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion."

Cialdini identified the six principles through experimental studies,  
and by immersing himself in the world of what he called "compliance professionals",  
people who are skilled in the art of convincing and influencing others.

Here are his six principles of influence:

1. Reciprocity

People tend to return favors, pay back debts, and treat others as they treat us.  
According to the idea of reciprocity,  
this can lead us to feel obliged to offer concessions or discounts to others if they have  
offered them to us.  
This is because we're uncomfortable with feeling indebted to them.

2. Commitment and Consistency

People have a deep desire to be consistent.  
Because of this desire for internal consistency,  
once we've made any commitment to something,  
then we're then more inclined to go through with honoring the commitment,  
even if the original incentive or motivation is removed.  
(If we don't, then we suffer from cognitive dissonance.)

3. Social Proof.

People will do things that other people do.  
That is why conformity is so pervasive.

4. Liking

People are more likely to be influenced by people they like.  
We are more easily persuaded by people who are similar or familiar to us, people who  
give us compliments, or people we just simply trust.  
(Bear in mind that this 'liking' may simply be the familiarity that comes from  
exposure,  
the 'mere exposure' effect about which I spoke earlier.)

## 5. Authority

People tend to obey authority figures,  
even if it involves something unpleasant or objectionable.

We are even influenced by the authority conveyed by people's titles and positions and their clothes.

## 6. Scarcity

Scarcity generates demand.

If we perceive something is scarce,  
then we're more likely to want it.

That's the power of 'only a few left' and 'for a limited time only'.

### [SLIDE] – **One model**

So, now let's look at one marketing model that's used in commerce  
And see how it might be used to effect cultural change for biosensitivity.

Let's look at the basic sales model,  
and how it might be used for selling change.

### [SLIDE] – **'Selling' change**

**The basic sales model is all about moving a potential client from pain island to pleasure island**

(with thanks to Vrinda Normand, [irresistablemarketing.com](http://irresistablemarketing.com) & her clients for introducing me to this model).

In the basic sales model, **Pain Island** is where your ideal prospective clients, your audience is now.

It's what they are currently struggling with and where they are stuck.

Pain Island sucks.

Your audience members are marooned on Pain Island,  
suffering, frustrated and no matter how hard they try,  
they don't know how to escape!

Until you (the hero) come along.

You are the captain of a boat, and your business is the "boat."

Your purpose is to get people off Pain Island and take them to...Pleasure Island.

**Pleasure Island** is where your audience want to be.

Pleasure Island is amazing,

full of abundance, beauty, fun, freedom, happiness and the positive results your audience members are craving.

You know what it's like because you've been to Pleasure Island (in a certain area of your life),

and you know how to help others get to this same destination.

When people buy a ticket to get on your boat,

they don't care about how your boat works.

They care about where they're going – they invest in the destination.

And you need to make sure that getting on board is very easy;

it has to be a no-brainer for them.

**[SLIDE] – ‘Selling’ change – why?**

I am attracted to the basic sales model as an important component of catalysing social change for sustainability for a couple of reasons.

First, it is all about framing.

And reframing is, I think, the key element in changing culture.

As George Lakoff says, reframing *is* social change.

Second, it opens people’s eyes to alternatives to their current ways of living and thinking.

Many people are aware of the problems our current lifestyles and economic systems are generating,

But they do not necessarily know how to change,

let alone change the incredibly strong, overriding culture and systems that perpetuate *unsustainability*.

Others are not consciou of the problems.

Yet the sales model, via Pain Island, can open their eyes to the problems,

And, via Pleasure Island and the boat, offer alternatives.

As the saying goes,

If you don’t know where you’re going, any path will take you there –

Especially if you’re being swept along with the crowd.

**[SLIDE] – ‘Selling’ change**

So, here’s how the mechanics of the basic sales model work:

1 We start on Pain Island:

Here’s where you show that you understand the person’s problem/pain.

You describe the problem and pain for the other person,

then ‘rub salt’ into it, using as many senses as possible, to make it seem even worse.

By doing this you show the other person how much you understand their situation.

This builds rapport, so they trust you.

2 Pleasure Island:

You then show them a better alternative.

You show how it solves their problem and pain.

Again, you use as many senses as possible.

This sets up the dilemma/conflict:

they want to be on Pleasure Island but they’re stuck on Pain Island –

how do they get from Pain Island to Pleasure Island?

3 The Boat:

You then show them the Boat (with you as captain) that will take them from Pain Island to Pleasure Island.

Getting on board the boat has to be a no-brainer, so you have to make it as easy as possible.

**[SLIDE] – Language...**

You may have noticed that this basic sales model works by engaging the prospective client's emotions.

In fact, all advertising does this.

Because a decision to buy – to take action, to change – is emotional, not intellectual.

So, we need to choose our language, words, stories and images carefully  
So that we can frame the debate to catalyse the social changes we are seeking.

Now let's bring all the elements I have spoken about together,  
And look at the basic sales model in the context of catalysing social change for biosensitive society.

### **[SLIDE] – Pain Island**

First, we look in great detail at what Pain Island is like.

(That's what it's like living in the Anthropocene, as well as the time that has led to it.)

Our ability to identify exactly what's going on for others will make a MASSIVE difference to how well they receive our marketing message.

What does Pain Island look and feel like to them?

Remember from Val & John's work that every audience has its own story.

Get clear on what they are currently experiencing and you'll be 75% of the way towards helping them take action.

The audience needs to know that you've been on Pain Island, or that you've helped people who've been there.

They need to know that you are a normal human being and you've suffered just like them.

Then they will start trusting us, be inspired by us, and begin to *aspire* to something greater in their own life.

So the first and most important part of marketing is being able to describe Pain Island in terms that will resonate with potential clients.

Language is the key here – especially using the same language, imagery, situations that they recognise.

And how do we find that out?

We hang out where they hang out.

Online. In electronic media. In print media. In real life.

We look, listen, read.

Now, because we are people living in a society, we already know some of this.

And that's what I want you to draw on – that tacit knowledge we all have.

### **[SLIDE] – What are dominant...**

We can start by looking at what might be the dominant images, stories and words in our culture.

Here are some things that we might consider.

This is where the current government and most corporations are taking us.  
We can bring these out into the open  
And ask 'Is that where you want to go?'

**[SLIDE] – Pleasure Island**

We also need to describe what Pleasure Island is like.  
(This is what life is like in what Tom Faunce called the Sustainocene.)

Again, we need to know exactly what our prospects are looking for, in the short and long term.

This is where we need to use language that shows them that there is a real alternative to Pain Island and causes them to want to take action.

This is the reframing that George Lakoff says is so necessary in his seminal book 'Don't Think of an Elephant'.

We need to take them through the transformation and experience that will happen with what we're offering, not just the nuts and bolts involved.

**We need to focus on the stages that someone will go through to transform.**

We need to be able to communicate what Pleasure Island looks and feels like so they are inspired to take ACTION to get in the boat that will take them there.

**[SLIDE] – What do we want to replace them with?**

Now, what do we want to replace the currently dominant images, stories and words with?

Here are some things that we might consider.

**[SLIDE] – How do we replace them?**

Finally, *how* do we replace them?

**This is the Boat**

But what is the boat that will take them from Pain to Pleasure island?

The boat is simply the means of getting there.

The biggest mistake many people make when implementing their marketing system is trying to use their *modality* (particular expertise) as the boat.

People don't care about your modality, they don't care what the boat is like.

They care about having a better life.

That's why, with the basic sales model, you need to establish trust and rapport by describing **Pain** and **Pleasure Island** *first*.

Once you've established that trust and rapport – then, and only then, can you show them the boat, whatever it is (your product, service, training or idea) that will help them get there.

This is where we need to use language that causes them to actually take action.

Now, the boat might not be a single step or action to get from Pain Island to Pleasure Island.

It may be a *framework* or *system*, a step-by-step *sequential* journey from Pain Island to Pleasure Island.

Imagine a boat taking a stranded sailor from Pain Island to Pleasure Island.  
It's a long journey, so they have to make some stops at the smaller islands in between.  
The smaller stops are the steps within the framework, and each of those steps is one step closer to Pleasure Island.

And that sort of thinking may be very helpful in our current situation.  
We do not necessarily know in detail what Pleasure Island is like.  
It may take some time to develop, and to agree –  
And there may be more than one version.

But that doesn't mean that we can't hop on a boat.

**[SLIDE] – old outrigger**

We might need to be like the people who originally colonised the South Pacific.

They didn't know where they would end up.  
They just knew that they had to leave.

We may be in a similar situation.  
We can paint the picture of Pain Island.  
We can point out that this is where our current culture, our current governments and corporations are taking us.  
And we can ask : Is this where you want to end up?

I suspect that most people will not.  
They might not know what they want, but they sure know what they don't want.  
And they might just have to join us and hop on board a boat and set out in hope of a better life than what we have now.

And there are boats to get on right now to get to Pleasure Island.

Some boats are legal  
Eg changing what words we choose to use, divesting from fossil fuels, investing in renewable energy, choosing to travel without a car, eating locally-grown food

Some boats are not legal (for a variety of reasons)  
Eg locking on to heaving equipment to stop clearing of natural habitats or mining

Frank Fenner Foundation can help people imagine a different future  
And help them get on boats to get there.

**[SLIDE] – Summary 1**

To recap,

Culture is about communication.  
Language, stories and images that resonate with us emotionally are the key.  
Psychology and marketing can provide invaluable help with transforming culture.  
A bold, vivid and clear alternative that engages us emotionally is the key to change.

**[SLIDE] – Summary 2**

The science and art of marketing is about changing attitudes and behaviour.  
As such, it offers a useful tool for effecting the social changes our societies need to become biosensitive.

One basic marketing model: Pain Island, Pleasure Island, Boat

Pleasure Island – imagining different futures (scenarios)

There are boats to get to Pleasure Island

Pacific colonisers – get on boats without knowing destination

Taking B, some possibilities re way forward

FFF can help people imagine different future

→ help get people get on boats that may be legal

**[SLIDE] – Ubuntu**

**[SLIDE] – Discussion**

**[SLIDE] – Margaret Mead quote**

**Supplementary slides**

Asian window

Model for developing Pleasure Eco-Island

Vision: Bold, vivid & clear is vital – Christina Figueres quote

Vision: Bold, vivid & clear is vital – JFK moon goal quote & analysis

It's Time

Model for developing Pleasure Eco-Island – CC example

Energy White Paper cover images

Archaic thinking in 21st century - Energy White Paper language

Jacqui Lambie

March in March

\*Letter of hope x 3

Social marketing books x 2