

Black Friday and Greed: The New Dynamic Duo

Peanut butter and jelly, Tom and Jerry, macaroni and cheese, move aside, there's a new dynamic duo in town: Black Friday and greed.

Black Friday originated in the early '60s and was originally used to refer to the congestion of shoppers the day after Thanksgiving. It was later called "Black Friday" because it was the day retailers' bank accounts went from "in the red" to "in the black," or from being in the negative to being in the positive again due to the high amount of people shopping for Christmas gifts. Twenty five percent of retailers' yearly revenue was made during the month leading up to Christmas.

At one point, Black Friday wasn't just on Friday. It was an entire week-end of deals. This was gradually shortened until it was just on Friday to create a sense of urgency, leading to the modern Black Friday. The modern Black Friday is now spreading to Tuesday, however.

Since 2005, Black Friday has been the number one shopping day of the year. Slowly, this has lead Black Friday to take over Thanksgiving as well, with some stores opening as early as 5 pm in 2014. Many people are morally opposed to this idea, stating that it takes away from the previous day's holiday.

Black Friday has led to violence and even death in the past. Since 2006, there has been 10 deaths and 111 reported injuries related to Black Friday. The greed of people in the world today has led to dangerous situations fueled by the low prices and extreme deals available.

Greed is prevalent in today's society more than ever before. Black Friday is a perfect example of how materialism can easily overshadow the holidays.

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Religion and the Psychological Effect of Greed

The irony of Black Friday is not lost on Americans. The day after Thanksgiving, a day set aside for expressing gratitude, is spent scouring for deals to buy more material items. Trends have shown more stores are opening on Thanksgiving day. This behavior comes back to one concept: greed.

Greed is defined as a selfish and intense desire for material items, money, or power. The idea of greed is not new. In fact, greed has been cautioned in various religions throughout history. In Christianity, greed is one of the seven deadly sins. Buddhists refer to greed as one of the three poisons. Hindu theology warns against greed, calling it one of the six enemies of the mind. While the world religions may be against greed, the question begs to be asked: what does science have to say about it? Interestingly, science has, in a way, backed up the teachings of religion. Research has found greed has an effect on the human psyche.

According to Forbes Magazine's article "How Greed Works", greed is powered by the neurotransmitter dopamine. This means when you feed your greed, or feel the anticipation of gaining a reward, more dopamine goes off in your brain. When you experience more

dopamine, you experience more pleasure. Craving for more money or material items lights up the same area as other instant pleasures, like drugs. For reference, drugs like cocaine also raise dopamine levels. Just like with drug abuse, "greed addicts" need more and more money or material items to get the same rise of dopamine levels.

Decisions made out of greed are not entirely in our control. Research done by author Bobby Monks shows our hormones, neural passages, and genes influence how we act on greed. According to Monks, humans are "hardwired" to want to accumulate possessions and wealth. Monks says, as long as an individual is aware of the effect of greed on the brain, they will be able to curb its negative effects. So while greed may be, according to religion, immoral, science shows it is a typical neurochemical reaction humans experience.

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IN GREED,

Drawn by

Consumerism During the Holiday Season

The holiday season is coming up, and every year, as the calendar edges closer and closer to December, the time comes for us to buy, buy, buy. The stretch from Black Friday into Christmas is undoubtedly the most consumerist time of the year for almost everybody in the nation who celebrates the holidays. During last year's Black Friday, records were broken as people all across the nation spent \$5 billion dollars in just 24 hours. Cyber Monday was an even bigger hit: grossing \$6.59 billion in retail sales across the internet, it was one of the best days that companies like Amazon have ever had. And this year's holiday shopping season was even larger than the last: between Black Friday and Christmas, the average amount people expected to spend on their holiday items broke \$1,000 per shopper – a 4.3% increase from last year. It's clear to see that the spirit of consumerism is only getting stronger.

In the 1990s, Oxford ran a study of 100 million different words to see which of them were most commonly associated with Christmas. Back then, the top picks were what you'd expect: "wonderful," "glow," "colorful," "holly,"... but in 2015, the same study was done, and most of these words disappeared. In their places came "sales," "trading," "spend," and "retailer." It's not that Christmas in the '90s – or even decades prior – was a perfect holiday, but the integration of the internet into daily life and the advent of smartphones has really helped the magic of advertising burrow its way into our subconscious.

Nowadays, in a world bound together by mass culture, it's easier than ever for corporations to get really up close and personal with your values and emotions. The dog shelter ads with all the close-up shots of sad puppies are a classic example

of advertising that plays with your feelings, but what if advertisers could get you to let down your guard in more subtle ways? What if, say, a Pepsi ad could reel you in like a sad puppy could? This is an advertiser's dream, and it's quickly becoming reality as advertising campaigns become increasingly pervasive and interactive. A good way to coax people into consumption nowadays is to use politics as the trojan horse. A few months ago, Nike got political to great applause from consumers: three weeks after launching their Colin Kaepernick ad campaign with the slogan "Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything," the company made \$6 billion in sales. On Twitter,

fast food companies type and bicker with each other like teenagers because if they say something cute enough, you'll buy their burgers. The artificial intimacy of modern capitalism has proven to be a very powerful machine.

Even if the spirit of consumerism is everywhere nowadays, the good news is that people are still, like always, taking time to spend the holidays with their families. In 2015, a study of 2,000 British people's most cherished memories found that just about half of those memories were of being on holiday with their families. The holiday statistician John McDonald says that the holiday season is often a "happiness anchor" when times get tough – many of the adults in the survey said that they instinctively call on their holiday memories when they're feeling low. So, despite the constant overhang of advertising and consumer culture, the holiday season is still a special time of year for families – not just corporations – the world over.

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American Society

selfish desire for something,
wealth, power, or food.



WE TRUST

Elizabeth VanWelden

GoFundMe Funds Fraud

If you saw someone drop a \$20 bill in front of you, would you tell them? Many people would say, "no." That is economic greed. When someone sees a lot of dollar signs in their bank account, they automatically feel happy. Money can't buy you happiness, but this couple thought it would.

Mark D'Amico, Kate McClure, and homeless man Johnny Bobbitt Jr. were charged with second-degree theft by deception and conspiracy to commit theft. The couple, D'Amico and McClure, met Bobbit on a freeway, befriended him, and then came up with the plan that would change their lives. The plan was to say that Bobbit was a homeless veteran who gave McClure money for gas. A GoFundMe page was later created with a goal of raising \$10,000 and surpassed that goal with a total of \$402,706.

But the "entire campaign was predicated on a lie," Burlington County prosecutor Scott



Coffina said.

The couple decided to give Bobbit only \$75,000 over time because they thought he would spend it on drugs. He went to the authorities, and that is when the story unraveled. The authorities confiscated the rest of the money from the couple, and they turned themselves in. It is unknown if Bobbit

turned himself in.

This is a great example of economic greed, as people are scamming others for their own benefit. Money plays a big factor in people's greed because the mindset of having more money equals more happiness. GoFundMe does try to crack down on fraud campaigns, but it doesn't always work. Fundraisers aren't required to get back to GoFundMe to say how they used their money, and that is why it is so easy to become fraudulent.

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Top 7 Wealthiest People in the US*

*As of January 2018, according to Time Magazine

- 1. Jeff Bezos**
-CEO of Amazon
-Net worth: \$109.9 billion
- 2. Bill Gates**
-Founder of Microsoft
-Net worth: \$93.3 billion
- 3. Warren Buffet**
-Chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway
-Net worth: \$87.2 billion
- 4. Mark Zuckerberg**
-Co-founder, Chairman, and CEO of Facebook
-Net worth: \$77.5 billion
- 5. Larry Page**
-Co-founder of Google Inc. and CEO of Alphabet Inc.
-Net worth: \$54.9 billion
- 6. Larry Ellison**
-CEO of Oracle
-Net worth: \$54.7 billion
- 7. Sergey Brin**
-Co-founder of Google Inc. and President of Alphabet
-Net worth: \$53.3 billion

Action // Reaction

Do you think greed is a problem in America?



Freshman Nona Van Berkum

"I think so. People tend to not be happy with what they already have, when they should be grateful with where they are at."



Sophomore Mason Holland

"Yes. You can see a lot of people with money hoard it for themselves, instead of helping others."



Junior Hanna Kendall

"I definitely think greed is an issue in America. In the US, we're often told you must work for what you want, which I don't disagree with, but I think that sentiment often makes us lack empathy for those who have less."



Senior Brandon Beyer

"Yes. Of course."

