

The Consumer Emotion *Map*

10 feelings consumer ads run on, what each one needs, and where the line is

Built on 6,480 ads and videos in the BMD library. Vocabulary from Brené Brown's Atlas of the Heart. Evidence from peer-reviewed research, checked against the primary source.

How to use this map

Use the map in three steps. Find the moment your customer is in and the feeling it carries. Read the entry for that feeling, including the neighbor it gets confused with, which usually needs a different message. Then run the tests in Part 5 before anything ships.

It is written for anyone who writes or approves consumer advertising in a Saudi company: the marketing lead, the agency, the founder signing off the Ramadan campaign.

This is the consumer companion to The Emotion Map, our free guide to the 24 emotions behind B2B buying. That map covers a buyer protecting a position inside a company. This one covers a customer who wants something, or wants to be part of something.

Seven of the ten names come from Brené Brown's Atlas of the Heart (Random House, 2021). Desire, hope and duty are not in the Atlas; they are entries of our own. The definitions are BMD's own wording, not quotations. BMD is not affiliated with Brené Brown or her publisher.

VERDICT Name the feeling, then give it the one thing it needs next.

Consumer ads run on wanting, not pain

The Emotion Map files seven emotions under "when the problem arrives": stress, overwhelm, anxiety, dread, frustration, disappointment and resignation. Across the 4,370 ads and videos in the library that are written to a named emotion, those seven carry 419, under 10%.

Desire alone carries 673. Of the seven emotions with the most ads, six are feelings the B2B map does not name. 2,504 of the 4,370, 57%, are written to one of the ten in this map.

VERDICT A brief that starts from pain starts from the smallest part of the library.

What 6,480 ads show

How the library was read

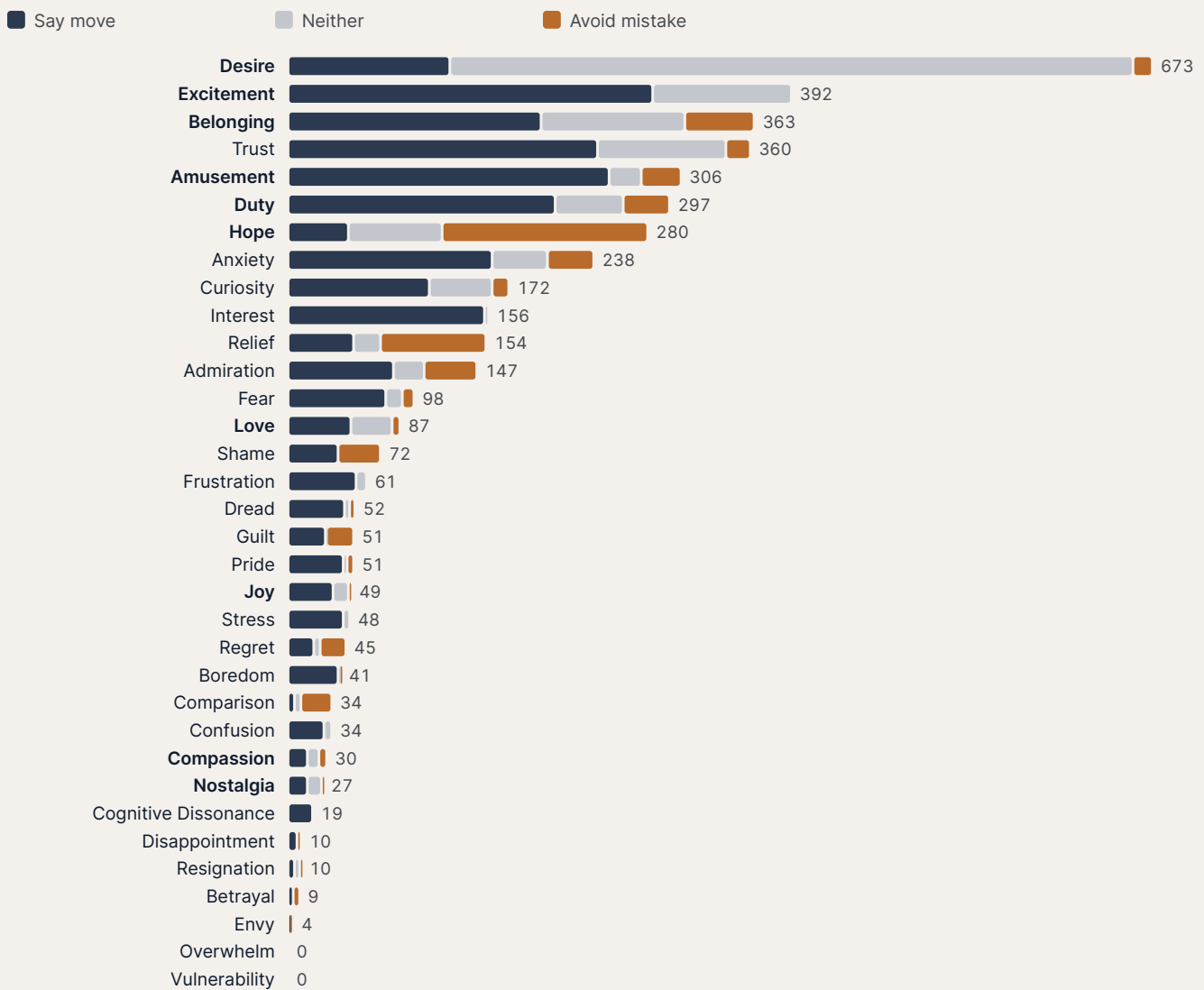
Every ad and video on bmds.sa/library carries a written analysis in English and Arabic: the big idea, the offer, the proof and the lines quoted from the ad. In September 2026 each of the 6,480 items was read against 34 emotions, the Map's 24 plus the ten in this map, and given the one emotion it is written to, or none. Each tagged item also got a verdict: it makes the emotion's Say move, it makes its Avoid mistake, or it does neither clearly.

The tags are a reading, not a measurement. They say what an ad is written to and whether it makes the move the research supports. They do not say whether it sold.

COLLECTION	ITEMS	NO EMOTION	TAGGED	SAY MOVE	AVOID MISTAKE
Historical ads from public archives, mostly American and British	2,210	718	1,492	1,010	221
Egyptian press, 1905 to 1975 (American University in Cairo archive)	2,755	813	1,942	1,022	298
Gulf brand posts on X and Instagram, most from 2026	825	426	399	159	53
Written breakdowns of Gulf campaigns	249	74	175	80	17
Videos on YouTube, mostly television spots	441	79	362	206	42
All	6,480	2,110	4,370	2,477	631

The library by collection. It is a collection, not a sample of any market.

All 34 emotions, by number of ads



Ads and videos written to each emotion, split by verdict. Names in bold are the ten consumer feelings in this map; the rest are The Emotion Map's 24. 2,110 items are written to none of the 34.

The feelings ads get wrong most

Among the emotions with 30 or more ads, only three have more Avoid mistakes than Say moves: hope (160 against 47), relief (82 against 51) and comparison (24 against 5).

Hope and relief are both promises about a state the reader has not reached, and a promise costs nothing to print. Most of these mistakes sit in the Egyptian and English press of the 1920s and 1930s: tonics, cures, slimming teas, correspondence courses and lotteries. Comparison fails when it feeds the race to match what others visibly have.

VERDICT The feelings that fail most are the ones that promise.

Gulf brand ads

The library holds 1,074 Gulf brand ads, 764 of them Saudi. 500 of them, 47%, are written to none of the 34 feelings, and 291 of those lean on a price, a discount, points or cashback instead. In the English archive the share with no emotion is about a third.

Where a Gulf ad reaches for a feeling, it is desire most often, and desire is left unfinished most often: 191 Gulf desire ads, 156 of them showing the want with no terms at the same size, 22 making the full move. Belonging follows with 100 ads: 54 make the Say move and 21 make the Avoid mistake, mostly occasion greetings any brand could sign. Across the Gulf ads that carry a feeling, 42% make the Say move, against 68% in the English archive, which was collected as a swipe file and leans toward ads someone thought worth keeping.

VERDICT Offers with no feeling, and feelings with no offer.

The ten feelings

How to read an entry

Each entry has five parts. What it is is a plain definition. Where it shows up names the categories and moments. Say is the move that works. Avoid is the mistake that turns the feeling against the brand. Neighbors are the feelings it gets confused with. Under each entry: the evidence with its limits, and ads from the library doing it right and wrong. The entries run from the most common in the library to the least.

The ten at a glance

FEELING	ADS	SAY MOVE	NEITHER	AVOID MISTAKE
Desire الرغبة	673	126	532	15
Excitement الحماس	392	284	108	0
Belonging الانتماء	363	197	112	54
Amusement الاستمتاع بالطرافة	306	250	25	31
Duty الواجب	297	208	53	36
Hope الأمل	280	47	73	160
Love الحب	87	49	32	6
Joy الفرح	49	35	12	2
Compassion الرحمة	30	15	9	6
Nostalgia الحنين إلى الماضي	27	15	11	1

WHAT IT IS	Wanting a thing for itself: how it looks, tastes or feels, or the life it opens. It feels good and uneasy at once, because picturing it reminds you that you do not have it yet.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	A new phone, perfume, a flight sale, a first-class seat, a plot of land.
SAY	Make the want concrete so the reader can act with eyes open: the thing up close, in the place it will be used, doing what it does. Then the offer at the same size: the full price with every fee, the conditions and where to buy.
AVOID	Stoking the want and hiding the terms: a "from" price few will get, fees that appear only at checkout, conditions in small print, a deadline that is not real. Hidden terms can lift sales on the day, but the buyer pays more and likes the choice less. In Saudi Arabia an online ad counts as part of the contract, and it must not mislead.
NEIGHBORS	Envy, Regret, Hope

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Vivid, concrete messages shifted attitudes and stated intentions by a small to medium amount (Blondé and Girandola 2016, 43 effects from 27 papers, 7,575 people). Limit: it measured intentions, not purchases, and pooled health and commercial messages.

For the Avoid line Showing ticket fees only at checkout, instead of the full price from the start, raised spending by about 21% and the purchase rate by 14% (Blake and colleagues 2021, several million users of one ticket resale site over ten days). Limit: one platform, and the figures come from the 2018 working paper.

For the Avoid line When optional fees were revealed step by step, 24.5% of buyers ended up with the airline that cost more in total, against 7.8% when fees were shown up front, and they were less satisfied with their choice (Santana and colleagues 2020, 408 adults on an online panel). Limit: the first of six studies, with small cash stakes.

IN THE LIBRARY

673 ads and videos. 126 make the Say move, 15 make the Avoid mistake, 532 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

IKEA Saudi: 1 riyal ice cream for IKEA Family members

حلالوتها بريال (Its sweetness for a riyal)

A single soft-serve cone shot close on plain green sells the taste, and the 1 riyal sits under its own IKEA Family price tag with the free sign-up stated beside it.

bmds.sa/library/ads/ikeasaudiarabia_DdJlgr3jTat/

DOING IT RIGHT

Kesma perfume ad, al-Kawakib 1960

تضيف عليك الجمال والسحر والفتنة (It gives you beauty, charm and allure)

The want is made concrete, a luxury Kesma bottle in a silk pouch for the handbag, and the terms sit beside it: 43 small, 57 large, big stores and pharmacies, a Cairo showroom address.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll122_40047/

DOING IT WRONG

Ideal fitted kitchens ad, al-Kawakib 1957

المطبخ الانسيابي حلم ربة البيت! (The streamlined kitchen, every housewife's dream)

It calls the kitchen every housewife's dream and promises pride in showing it to friends, then gives only a from-3-pounds-a-month figure over 23 months and never the full price.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll122_2784/

Excitement الحواس

ATLAS NAME

WHAT IT IS	Eager, energized anticipation of something good. It feels like anxiety in the body, but the story is hopeful. It is strongest for things people will do, not things they will own.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	A launch, a match, a concert, a sale opening, a new route, a film premiere, a trip being booked.
SAY	Lead with what will happen, then close with the date, the time and one step to be there: book, register, set a reminder. The date and time turn the feeling into a plan.
AVOID	Promising specifics the day will not keep: an act not yet booked, a feature the ad shows but the product lacks, a "last chance" that moves, a countdown that restarts. Obvious, playful exaggeration is fine; a claim people can check has to be true.
NEIGHBORS	Anxiety, Disappointment

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move A firm mailed flu-clinic reminders to its staff; a prompt to write down the date and time they would go raised vaccination by 4.2 points on a 33.1% base, while a date alone added 1.5 points, not a significant gain (Milkman and colleagues 2011, 3,272 employees). Limit: one US firm and a health visit, not an ad.

For the Avoid line Higher expectations went with higher satisfaction, not lower, and only 2 of 99 studies found the reverse; satisfaction tracked how the product performed (Schiebler and colleagues 2025, 150 records, 58,597 people). Limit: mostly surveys, and very large gaps between promise and product could not be tested.

For the Avoid line The UK advertising code allows obvious exaggeration people will not take literally as long as it does not mislead, requires proof for claims people will take as fact and bans falsely saying an offer is available only for a limited time (CAP Code, rules 3.2, 3.7 and 3.30). Saudi Arabia's E-Commerce Law bans false or misleading claims in electronic ads (Article 11).

IN THE LIBRARY

392 ads and videos. 284 make the Say move, 0 make the Avoid mistake, 108 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

Bank Muscat x Visa: get presale tickets for the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027

احصل على تذاكر البيع المسبق لحضور كأس آسيا السعودية ٢٠٢٧. (Get presale tickets to attend the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027.)

It leads with the Asian Cup 2027 and two painted fans already in the stadium, then gives one step and the window: download the Ahlan app, booking open 48 hours from 15 September 2026.

bmds.sa/library/ads/bankmuscat_DdT1kFYjgvZ/

DOING IT RIGHT

Samir children's magazine free board game ad, al-Kawakib 1964

سمير يقدم لعبة هالما (Samir presents the game of Halma)

The Halma board gets a holiday to fill, 'a gift to spend the Eid al-Adha holiday with', then the step: wait for it with the issue of 19 April 1964, 30 millimes.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795col122_33240/

DOING IT WRONG

No ad in the library makes this mistake.

WHAT IT IS	Being your unedited self and wanted anyway. It starts with accepting yourself. In ads it means being part of something bigger (a family, a city, a country) without changing to be let in; its opposite is fitting in, changing yourself to match what a group wants.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	National Day and Founding Day, Ramadan, the family gathering, the local team, "made here".
SAY	Join something the group already does, in its own words and customs, and give the product a real job in it: the dish on the iftar table, the call that brings the family together, the shirt fans wear to the match. The ad lands best when the occasion has already put the identity on people's minds. Cultural fit on its own moves people only a little, so the product's part is what makes the ad yours.
AVOID	Selling fitting in ("buy this or be left out", "a real fan has this"): people resist being told how to prove they belong, and advertising codes bar it in ads aimed at children. Also the stock occasion ad: flags, lanterns and a greeting any brand could sign. When many ads share the same scenery, people forget who said what, and the less known brand loses most.
NEIGHBORS	Comparison, Shame, Joy

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Fitting an ad to the audience's cultural values made it only slightly more persuasive, and the gain has shrunk over the years (Hornikx and colleagues 2023, 121 comparisons, 12,201 people). Limit: a meta-analysis of experiments on value appeals, none of them from the Middle East.

For the Avoid line Ads that spelled out how members of a group should choose lowered purchase likelihood, compared with ads that only mentioned the identity (Bhattacharjee and colleagues 2014, five studies). Limit: stated purchase likelihood, not sales, and the abstract does not give sample sizes.

For the Avoid line In Saudi Arabia the national flag may not be used as a trademark or in commercial advertising (Flag Law, Royal Decree M/3 of 1393H, Article 15). The Ministry of Commerce said in September 2022 that the ban applies at all times, National Day included.

IN THE LIBRARY

363 ads and videos. 197 make the Say move, 54 make the Avoid mistake, 112 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

Jahez Shops: RATIO coffee gift box beside a backgammon board

علي يمينك (On your right)

The RATIO carrier is printed with the phrase on your right, from the custom of serving the guest on the right first, and its tap and stacked cups make it serve a gathering.

bmds.sa/library/ads/jahezapp_Ddd3kNnDYvP/

DOING IT RIGHT

KFC Arabia: Baloot player archetypes become collectible cards

الصكة بيلها كنتاكي

It joins game night in Baloot players' own slang, turns the familiar table types into collectible cards, and gives the box a real job at the table: a slot that holds the playing cards.

bmds.sa/library/ads/gcc_aotw121099/

DOING IT WRONG

Gattegno fabrics department ad, Bint al-Nil 1953

قسم الأقمشة بمحلات جاتينيو (The fabrics department at the Gattegno stores)

Its closing line, that every elegant woman must visit the fabrics department, sells fitting in: the visit becomes the price of counting as elegant rather than a reason tied to the European novelties.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll148_4652/

WHAT IT IS	Light, playful pleasure when something strikes you as funny, often because it doesn't quite fit. What does not fit is a little wrong or unexpected, but harmless.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Sketch ads, wordplay, a cartoon mascot, a jingle that teases the category's own habits.
SAY	Build the joke on the product's point, so the laugh lands on the problem it fixes or the thing it does, and the brand arrives with the punchline. One joke carries one point: state the price, the terms and anything that needs trust plainly, outside the joke.
AVOID	A joke that works without the product: people remember the joke and forget whose ad it was. And a laugh at someone's expense: a group (women, a region, an accent, a trade), a named rival, or the viewer. It reads as an insult, even to viewers who are not the target, and the brand carries it.
NEIGHBORS	Boredom, Shame

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move A strong joke unrelated to an ad's claims pushed the claims out of memory, and tying the same joke to the claims brought them back (Krishnan and Chakravarti 2003, two lab experiments). Across 89 studies humour's effect on persuasion was small, and humour tied to the message worked better with people who cared about the topic (Walter and colleagues 2018, studies from several fields, not only ads).

For the Avoid line Students shown stills from 15 funny and 15 plain real TV ads, the jokes unrelated to the products, recalled more of the funny ads, 67% against 53%, but of the ads they recalled, named the product less often for the funny ones, 77% against 92% (Hansen and colleagues 2009, 60 students). Limit: small Dutch samples, though a controlled follow-up with 31 people found the same drop in brand-name recall.

For the Avoid line An insurance ad reading "Everyone drives like a woman sometimes" and one reading "Everyone drives like an idiot sometimes" were both rated funnier than a plain ad, but only the second raised liking for the brand, and the first drew more offence (Warren and McGraw 2016, 71 men on a US online panel). Limit: one made-up print ad.

IN THE LIBRARY

306 ads and videos. 250 make the Say move, 31 make the Avoid mistake, 25 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT	DOING IT RIGHT	DOING IT WRONG
Almarai: the milk emoji we have isn't the milk we drink الایموجی المطلوب (The emoji we want) Setting a generic milk glass, the emoji we have, beside an Almarai bottle drawn as the emoji we want makes a joke that only works with the product: milk means Almarai. bmds.sa/library/ads/almarai_DcialHIjkm 6/	Bovril meat extract ad, The Sphinx 1921 <i>"Prevents that sinking feeling"</i> The phrase 'that sinking feeling' is drawn literally, a man in pyjamas afloat on a giant Bovril jar at sea, so the laugh only works with the product as the raft. bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_sphinx_5185/	Adams chewing gum ad, The Sphinx 1920 <i>"ADAMS PURE CHEWING GUM"</i> The height of fame pun rides on a biplane overhead and says nothing about the gum, so the joke would suit any brand; the product point, good for the children too, waits in the subline. bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_sphinx_4137/

WHAT IT IS	The pull of an obligation to people you belong to (family, country, community, faith), felt as "this is mine to do". Leaving it undone feels like guilt.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	War home-front posters (save fats, buy bonds, enlist), civic campaigns (save water, vaccinate, vote, register as an organ donor), zakat and Ramadan giving, a parent's duty to provide (insurance, savings, school fees).
SAY	Name one act and make it easy: what, where, by when. Give the reason in terms of people the reader is already bound to (parents, children, neighbors, the soldiers at the front) and say what the act adds up to.
AVOID	Duty enforced by shame, threat or public exposure ("slacker", "traitor", naming who has not given): it can push one visible act once, but it risks defiance and complaints against the sender. And a call with no act attached: "do your part" and nothing else.
NEIGHBORS	Guilt, Belonging, Pride

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move In the 2008 US election, phone calls that helped people plan what time they would vote, where they would be coming from and what they would do beforehand raised turnout by 4.1 points among those reached, while a standard "please vote" call had no significant effect (Nickerson and Rogers 2010, 287,228 people). Limit: the result has rarely been replicated, and a later study found planning helped only when people were also told how to vote.

For the Say move In Facebook ads run in March 2020, "protect your community" drew significantly fewer clicks than "protect yourself", while "protect your loved ones" did as well as "protect yourself" (Banker and Park 2020, 25,580 people). Limit: clicks only, over two days, in one country.

For the Avoid line A mailer telling Michigan voters their neighbors would see who voted raised turnout by 8.1 points, against 1.8 for a plain civic-duty reminder (Gerber and colleagues 2008, 180,002 households in a low-interest primary; the authors say they do not advocate shaming). In an experiment across 89 countries, a shaming, restrictive message did not raise intentions to comply but raised the pressured kind of motivation that went with defiance (Legate and colleagues 2022, 25,718 people, self-report).

IN THE LIBRARY

297 ads and videos. 208 make the Say move, 36 make the Avoid mistake, 53 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

al-Sharq Insurance Easy Policy ad, al-Kawakib 1975

الأقربون أولى بالمعروف (Charity begins with one's nearest kin)

It ties cover to the proverb on nearest kin and a hadith on family spending, then names one easy act: one pound a month, no medical exam, with each family payout stated in pounds.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll122_14996/

DOING IT RIGHT

"Our boys need sox" knitting poster "OUR BOYS NEED SOX"

"Our boys need sox" names people the reader is bound to and one small need, and "Knit your bit" hands it to anyone with needles and yarn, through the Red Cross.

bmds.sa/library/ads/ex_00141/

DOING IT WRONG

Recruiting poster: Are you missing from this picture?

"Are YOU missing from this picture?"

A blank outline in the walking crew points at the viewer as the one missing, yet the poster names no wage, yard or way to apply, so the call carries no act to take.

bmds.sa/library/ads/ex_00392/

WHAT IT IS	Wanting a better outcome that is not certain but still possible, and that matters: to get well, to have a child, to pass, to earn more. The hope that moves people has three parts: a goal, a way to reach it, and the belief that you can.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Tonics and remedies, weight loss, fertility, skin and hair treatments, courses and income schemes, savings plans, fertilizer, lottery tickets.
SAY	Give the hope a path: what changes, how, how long it usually takes and what the reader must do. Show what the typical buyer gets, not the best case, with evidence the reader can check: the trial, the licence, the real odds.
AVOID	False hope: a cure, a fortune or a result the product cannot deliver, promised to people who want it badly and are least able to judge the claim. Also a best-case testimonial with "results not typical" underneath: many readers still expect the best case.
NEIGHBORS	Desire, Excitement, Anxiety

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Where five testimonials claimed 48 to 72 pounds lost and "results not typical" ran in bold red, 55% of shoppers still took it that new users would lose at least 48 pounds; where the ad said the average user loses about 10 pounds in three months, 15% did (Hastak and Mazis 2004, 582 shoppers). Limit: made-up print ads, about 65 people per version, and it measured what people understood, not what they bought.

For the Avoid line When people were made less sure they could reach what they hoped for, they chose product-friendly sources, rated them as more credible and were worse at spotting weak claims (de Mello and colleagues 2007, three lab studies). Limit: the abstract does not give sample sizes.

For the Avoid line The UK advertising code bars unqualified "cure" claims, claims of a precise weight loss in a stated period and lottery ads that present playing as a way out of money worries (CAP Code, rules 12.7, 13.9 and 17.3). Saudi Arabia's E-Commerce Law bans false or misleading claims in electronic ads (Article 11).

IN THE LIBRARY

280 ads and videos. 47 make the Say move, 160 make the Avoid mistake, 73 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

Sakani: five steps to reserve a residential plot

أرضك دعمك (Your land is your support)

'Your first step toward the home of the future' gets a path: five linked boxes from single sign-on to the plot, and a last box stating what follows: sign, get the permit, build on time.

bmds.sa/library/ads/saudihousingcc_2064767853245399142/

DOING IT RIGHT

Middle East Institute of Telegraph and Wireless enrolment ad, al-Kawakib 1959

الدفعة الأولى لحملة الشهادات الثانوية بأقسامها (The first intake for holders of the secondary certificate in all its branches)

One year of study leads to a named post, seventh-grade wireless officer with a 3 pound allowance, and a free booklet of April 1959 exam statistics lets the reader check the path.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll122_45793/

DOING IT WRONG

Vigoron tonic ad, al-Kashkul 1924

المتعبون والمهزولون والمنهوكوا القوى والشيوخ (The tired, the thin, the worn out and the old)

It tells the tired, the thin and the old they will find strength, nerve, health and youth at once, a result no tonic can give, backed only by a maker's name.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll157_7029/

WHAT IT IS	What two people build when they drop their guard, let each other see everything, and handle it with care. How you treat yourself caps how well you can love someone else. In ads it is mostly family love: parent and child, partners.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Gifts, Mother's Day, a parent feeding a child, a wedding, a valentine.
SAY	Show love as something people do for each other: the meal cooked, the gift chosen, the call made. The product is the tool, not the hero, and the people stay at the centre. Talk about the time or care it makes possible, not what it costs.
AVOID	Making the product the proof of love: "a good mother buys this", or the price as the measure of care. It puts the reader on trial and turns love into guilt or shame. Blaming the viewer shrinks the effect and angers people, and people do not feel more appreciated for a pricier gift.
NEIGHBORS	Joy, Belonging, Guilt

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move People in 19 countries and 15 languages described the same feeling of being moved, with warmth in the chest, tears or chills, when they saw or lived a sudden act of closeness (Zickfeld and colleagues 2019, 3,542 people). Limit: self-report; it maps the feeling, not its effect on ads or sales.

For the Avoid line Guilt appeals that blamed the audience averaged about a fifth of the effect of those that only showed the harm (Peng and colleagues 2023, 26 studies, 7,512 people), and a second review found guilt appeals raise anger (Turner and Rains 2021, anger measured in 8 of 26 studies). Limit: neither review is specific to ads or family products, and the blame gap was only marginal once other factors were controlled.

For the Avoid line Gift givers expected pricier gifts to be appreciated more, but recipients' appreciation did not rise with price (Flynn and Adams 2009, three studies). Limit: gift appreciation, not response to ads, and the abstract does not give sample sizes.

IN THE LIBRARY

87 ads and videos. 49 make the Say move, 6 make the Avoid mistake, 32 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

ToYou: send a gift for no occasion at all

الهدية ما تحتاج مناسبة (A gift doesn't need an occasion)

The caption gives the real reason to send, sometimes you give because the person came to mind, and closes on delivering it to the one you hold dear, so the app is only the carrier.

bmds.sa/library/ads/toyouksa_2102020021270741107/

DOING IT RIGHT

Tawuniya: protection through every stage of life

حماية تمتد معك في كل مراحل الحياة (Protection that extends with you through every stage of life)

The father's hand at his pedalling son's back puts the care between two people at the centre, and the protection line casts Tawuniya as that steadying support rather than the hero.

bmds.sa/library/ads/tawuniya_DcI7tN1IvZr/

DOING IT WRONG

Egyptian General Insurance Organisation policy ad, al-Kawakib 1970

حنان الأم على أطفالها لا يكفي... (A mother's tenderness toward her children is not enough.)

'A mother's tenderness toward her children is not enough' puts her love on trial and makes the insurance policy the proof of care, with no price or policy detail to act on.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll122_36715/

WHAT IT IS	A sudden rush of delight that makes you feel connected to something bigger. It hits hard and doesn't last, unlike happiness. It is usually shared with people close to you, and often comes when something good arrives sooner or better than hoped.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Eid mornings, weddings, a homecoming, a child's first taste of something new.
SAY	Let viewers know whose moment it is while the joy is rising: show the brand early, bring it back in short touches inside the scene and say the name once. Put the product where it would really be: the meal on the table, the phone that makes the call. It need not cause the joy or fill the frame.
AVOID	Nameless joy: a feel-good film where the brand appears only on the end card. People enjoy it, but joy they feel before they know the brand did not raise their wish to buy. The opposite mistake costs too: the product pushed to the centre of every shot interrupts the moment, and people skip the ad more and share it less.
NEIGHBORS	Relief, Pride, Belonging

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Ads rated warmer, more exciting and more cheerful went with better brand attitudes, most of all for products bought for pleasure (Pham and colleagues 2013, 1,576 viewers and 1,070 TV ads in Belgium). Limit: one viewing in a test room, and joy could not be separated from warmth or excitement.

For the Say move Brands placed in the centre of the screen made viewers skip more, and splitting the same brand time into short pulses cut skipping (Teixeira and colleagues 2010, 31 TV ads and nearly 2,000 viewers, with eye tracking). Limit: skipping in a test setting, not sales, and the ads were not chosen for joy.

For the Avoid line Smiles after the brand first appeared went with higher purchase intent; smiles before it did not, and past a moderate level more entertainment lowered intent (Teixeira and colleagues 2014, 178 viewers and 82 TV ads, smiles tracked by webcam). Limit: drinks and sweets only, one viewing and stated intent rather than sales; two of the authors co-founded the face-tracking firm whose system was used.

IN THE LIBRARY

49 ads and videos. 35 make the Say move, 2 make the Avoid mistake, 12 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

Albaik: One group order, everyone picks their own

الطلب واحد.. والفرحة للجميع (One order. and the joy is for everyone)

Four friends' hands reach into one phone on match night, with a ball, goal net and scoreboard doodle around them, so the Albaik app sits inside the shared moment under 'the joy is for everyone'.

bmds.sa/library/ads/albaik_DaVwgvLDqWd/

DOING IT RIGHT

Kodak camera ad, al-Kashkul 1924

ان أوقاتك السعيدة تستحق التسجيل والرجوع إليها بواسطة كوداك (Your happy times deserve to be recorded and returned to, by means of Kodak)

A mother kneels at a garden gate to photograph her son and daughter while Kodak closes most lines about your happy times, so the brand is named inside the moment, not after it.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll157_7215/

DOING IT WRONG

The library's 2 examples are recent brand films; they are on the library's emotion page.

WHAT IT IS	Facing someone's suffering as an equal and offering kindness from beside them, not above them. It includes wanting to help, and its near neighbor is pity: the same concern felt from a distance, with the other person seen as lesser.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Charity and relief appeals, health campaigns, zakat and Ramadan giving, a brand helping in a crisis.
SAY	Show the need honestly, then the way forward: the person as someone with a life and plans, and exactly what the reader's help does and what changes after it (the water point, the school term, the course of treatment). For a brand, keep the cause and the people more visible than the logo, and say how much of each purchase goes to the cause.
AVOID	Pity: suffering staged to squeeze out a gift, people shown only as helpless, the reader cast as their rescuer. A sad face can lift giving in the moment, but dignified appeals have raised as much, and pity leaves people feeling nothing can change.
NEIGHBORS	pity, Guilt, Duty

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Describing one concrete thing a charity does, clean water for villages in West Africa, instead of its work in general, raised real donations by over 80%, from \$0.48 to \$0.88 out of a \$2 fee (Cryder and colleagues 2013, 119 adults in a US city; a second test with 94 more found the same). Limit: small sums and US donors.

For the Say move In two UK experiments, an appeal showing people in context and with a voice (in one, a child in class holding a "future doctor" sign) did no worse on how many gave or how much than one showing a lone suffering child, and the pity appeal left people feeling less able to do anything about poverty (Beswick and colleagues 2019, a student lab test and a nationally representative survey). Limit: the chapter gives no sample sizes; UK donors, African beneficiaries.

For the Avoid line A sad face does pay in the short run: 77% of people shown a charity flyer with a sad child gave part of their \$10 fee, against 52% when the same child looked happy or neutral (Small and Verrochi 2009, 151 US students and staff). Limit: mild sadness on a healthy child; those who gave did not give more, and the authors warn that intense misery may leave viewers feeling helpless.

IN THE LIBRARY

30 ads and videos. 15 make the Say move, 6 make the Avoid mistake, 9 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

Farm Frites Ad Ramadan 2015 - فارم فريتس تدعم جمعية ويانا لاطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة

اشترك في الحملة وادعم ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة (Join the campaign and support people with special needs.)

The footage shows Wayana's children on an outing, a girl making pizza, as people with lives, and each changed profile picture has a stated value: 1 pound to Wayana, up to 100,000.

bmds.sa/library/videos/WiCMhoYSBuk/

DOING IT RIGHT

Jameel Motorsport: Orphans' career dreams walk out as mascots

Orphans walk out in costumes of the careers they dream of, one astronaut hand in hand with the home captain, so they appear as children with plans, not as objects of pity.

bmds.sa/library/ads/gcc_aotw119201/

DOING IT WRONG

Islamic Muwasat Society hospital lottery ad, al-Musawwar 1932

الإنسانية (Humanity)

Humanity calls on you and the tears of the wretched plead with you: the poor appear only as weeping and the reader as their rescuer, even though a free hospital for the poor is named.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795col145_13916/

WHAT IT IS	A wistful longing for the past. It comforts, but misleads when we remember it as better than it was. Usually it is your own past (childhood, family, a home you left), sometimes an era known only from stories.
WHERE IT SHOWS UP	Old jingles brought back, heritage packs, "since 1950", a grandmother's recipe, Ramadan as it used to be, the brands of the viewer's teenage years.
SAY	Carry something real from then into now: the same recipe, song, pack or ritual, still here, so the past vouches for the product. Then say plainly what it does for the reader today, because the warm feeling can crowd out the point. It works best with people who already hold a memory of the brand.
AVOID	"Things were better then": it cuts the past off from the reader's present, and nostalgia for a past that feels cut off lowers mood instead of lifting it. Also a past the brand did not have: a founding year, "the original recipe" or "unchanged since" is a factual claim and has to be true.
NEIGHBORS	Belonging, Joy

THE EVIDENCE

For the Say move Nostalgic ads persuaded slightly more than plain ones, and the lift was larger when the brand or product was tied to viewers' own memories and for products bought for pleasure (Cheng and Yan 2023, 31 studies, 5,814 people). Limit: checked against the abstract only, so the share of lab and student samples is unknown.

For the Say move An ad built on viewers' own past beat a historical-nostalgia ad and a plain ad on warm feelings and liking of the ad, but trailed the plain ad on thoughts about the brand and recall of the message (Muehling and Pascal 2011, one experiment). Limit: the abstract does not give the sample size.

For the Avoid line Among first-year university students in the UK, nostalgia helped well-being when they felt their past still ran on into their present; when that link was weak, it lowered well-being, confidence in coping and interest in new opportunities (Iyer and Jetten 2011, one survey over time and two experiments). Limit: students only, not an advertising study, and sample sizes were not read.

IN THE LIBRARY

27 ads and videos. 15 make the Say move, 1 make the Avoid mistake, 11 do neither clearly.

DOING IT RIGHT

إيسكريم ساندوتش السعودية

إنتو طلبتوها! الوصفة الأصلية رجعت (You asked for it. The original recipe is back.)

A man talks to an ice cream sandwich like a lost love he failed to replace, then 'you asked for it, the original recipe is back' brings the missed taste into today, available now.

bmds.sa/library/videos/3JRrx5gUyCY/

DOING IT RIGHT

Coty lipstick ad, Bint al-Nil 1946

بعد غياب ٦ أعوام يعود إليك (After an absence of 6 years, it returns to you)

"After an absence of 6 years, it returns to you" brings back the same Rubens lipstick readers once used, then states four named shades and one price of 16 in all shops.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll148_1392/

DOING IT WRONG

Studio Misr cinema re-release ad, Bint al-Nil 1947

ستوديو مصر يلبي النداء ويجب الرجاء (Studio Misr answers the call and grants the request)

Its central claim, 'pre-war films are stronger and greater than post-war films', tells viewers things were better then, even as it brings al-Azima back to the screen from 2 June.

bmds.sa/library/ads/auc_p15795coll148_1086/

The Map's 24 in consumer ads

The Emotion Map was written for B2B buyers. The same 24 feelings show up in consumer ads, and the move carries over when it is read at the level of the ad. This table gives each one's move in consumer terms. The full entries, with their evidence, are in The Emotion Map.

EMOTION	ADS	SAY, IN A CONSUMER AD	AVOID
Trust الثقة	360	Accept the small start and make it reliable: a sample, a trial size, a guarantee kept over years, a first step the reader can check.	Asking for faith the brand has not earned: the big commitment, the long contract or the lifetime promise before any small promise has been kept.
Anxiety القلق	238	Make the unknown visible: what happens after the purchase, when, and what the buyer can do if it does not work, such as a stated return or refund.	Reassurance without detail. Telling the reader not to worry leaves the uncertainty where it was.
Curiosity الفضول	172	Name the gap precisely and close part of it in the ad itself: the question the reader has, and a real piece of the answer.	A tease that withholds the answer, such as a headline that promises a secret and never tells it. The reader takes it as a trick.
Interest الاهتمام	156	A useful thing with no strings attached: a free sample, a booklet, a recipe or a guide the reader can use whether or not they buy.	Treating interest as intent: asking for the purchase, the subscription or the long commitment before the reader has tried anything.
Relief الارتياح	154	Name the relief to people who have felt it, and show it: a user's own words, a shown result, a demonstration the viewer can watch.	A bare promise of relief the reader has not felt yet. With nothing to check and nothing lived, it is only a claim.
Admiration الإعجاب	147	The endorser the reader looks up to, with a path: what they do or use, how, and why, so the reader can see themselves doing it.	Only the famous face next to the product. Admiration without a path slides back into envy.
Fear الخوف	98	A fast, bounded response with one clear owner: one number to call, one thing to do now, who comes and when.	Urgency pricing on the spike, such as a scare followed by a countdown price, and playing on fear without a justifiable reason.
Shame الخزي	72	Move the problem from the person to the situation: the hard water, the long shift, the design of the old product. A situation can be fixed.	Shame appeals: copy that implies the reader is behind, careless, unclean or unwanted, the person others quietly avoid.
Frustration الإحباط	61	The mechanism: why the problem keeps coming back, and which part of it this product changes. The reader still has energy, so the ad gives it a direction.	Sympathy without a route: agreeing that the stain, the ache or the wait is annoying, with no reason this time will be different.
Dread التوجس	52	A concrete action with a date or moment, taken before the thing the reader dreads: a step for this week, before the season, the trip or the bill arrives.	Amplifying the threat without the step: the accident, the illness or the loss shown in full, and nothing the reader can do about it.

EMOTION	ADS	SAY, IN A CONSUMER AD	AVOID
Pride الفخر	51	Give the credit to the customer's own effort: the meal they cooked, the distance they ran, the home they built. The product helped; they did it.	The brand taking the credit. A win the product claims stops feeling like the customer's win.
Guilt الشعور بالذنب	51	Moderate and specific: what the lapse costs, and the repair still available, such as the call that can still be made or the check-up that can still be booked.	Heavy guilt: the let-down child, the lonely parent, the harm that could have been avoided, all laid on the viewer. It turns them against the ad and the brand.
Stress الضغط النفسي	48	Lighten the load: the chore the product takes off the reader's day, the step it saves, the thing they can stop doing.	Selling a whole new routine or a new life. A reader who is still coping hears big change as one more job.
Regret الندم	45	Lower the cost of being wrong: a money-back guarantee, free returns, a trial period, a smaller first size.	Pressure to decide fast: today only, last few left, the price goes up at midnight. It raises the regret it should lower.
Boredom الملل	41	A specific the viewer can check: a number, a named situation, a claim no rival in the category would make.	A prettier version of the line every ad in the category already runs. More polish on the same cliché still reads as the same ad.
Comparison المقارنة بالآخرين	34	Move the comparison from what others can see to what matters to the reader: how it works, how long it lasts, what it does for them.	Feeding the race to match what others visibly own: the car, the kitchen or the label bought so the neighbors notice.
Confusion الحيرة	34	A plain comparison frame the shopper can apply to every option, this brand included: price per use, what is in it, how long it lasts.	Jargon and invented ingredient names that make the brand sound expert. A confused shopper picks the cheapest option or buys nothing.
Cognitive Dissonance التناقض المعرفي	19	An easy way to close the gap between who the reader thinks they are and what they do, one that lets them stay the careful parent or smart spender they believe they are.	Rubbing it in: copy that keeps pointing at the gap. Pushed hard, people dismiss the evidence, and the ad with it.
Disappointment خيبة الأمل	10	Reset the expectation before promising: what the product will do, what it will not, and how the buyer can check both.	A bigger promise than the last product the reader tried. It schedules the next letdown.
Resignation الاستسلام	10	Low-cost evidence that trying again can work: a trial size, a short trial with a set end, a result the reader can see for themselves.	The energetic pitch that suits a frustrated reader. To someone who has given up on the whole category, it sounds like nobody is listening.
Betrayal خيانة الثقة	9	Acknowledge what let the reader down before without attacking the old brand, and put in writing how faith will be kept: a written guarantee, a stated policy, a promise the buyer can hold the brand to.	Criticizing competitors. Knocking the other brand sounds like the same story from a new teller.
Envy الحسد	4	Show what sits behind the other person's result, the routine or method the reader can follow. That turns envy into admiration.	Feeding it: selling imitation, the promise that buying this turns the reader into the person they envy.

EMOTION	ADS	SAY, IN A CONSUMER AD	AVOID
Overwhelm الشلل تحت الضغط	0	One first step, small and specific: one product, one use, one thing to do today. Subtract before adding.	A menu: the full range, many versions and several offers at once. Each extra choice is another reason to put it off.
Vulnerability الانكشاف العاطفي	0	What the person trying it needs to feel safe: an honest account of what it is like, the risks named, and a clear way out if it does not suit them.	Selling to the crowd and forgetting the one person who takes the risk: the first to try it in public, or the one who chose it for the whole family.

PART 04

Neighbors that need opposite messages

Most wrong messages are written to the neighbor of the right feeling. These pairs look alike from the outside. Decide which one the customer is in before writing a word.

IF THE CUSTOMER FEELS	SAY	IF THEY FEEL	SAY
Desire	The thing up close, and the offer at the same size: full price, fees, terms.	Envy	The system behind the other person's result, so the reader sees a path they can build.
Excitement	What will happen, then the date, the time and one step.	Anxiety	What happens, when, and what if it fails. Details, not "don't worry".
Joy	The brand inside the moment while the joy is rising.	Relief	Name the relief to people who have felt it, with something they can check.
Belonging	A real job for the product in something the group already does.	Fitting in	Nothing. It is the Avoid of belonging. Rewrite it as belonging.
Compassion	The person with a life and plans, and exactly what the help does.	Pity	Nothing. It is the Avoid of compassion. Put the person back at the centre.
Duty	One act, made easy, for people the reader is bound to.	Guilt	Moderate and specific: the cost of the lapse and the repair still open.
Hope	A path: what changes, how, how long, and what the typical buyer gets.	Desire	The thing itself, and the terms at the same size.
Love	People at the centre, the product as the tool.	Guilt	Never make the product the proof of love. Name a repair instead.

VERDICT If you can't say which neighbor it is, you haven't named the feeling yet.

Where the line is

Three tests before anything ships

01 Does every fear message come with a step the customer can actually take?

A meta-analysis of 248 samples, mostly of health messages, found fear appeals had a positive average effect, about twice as large when the message said people could act or that the action would work (Tannenbaum and colleagues, Psychological Bulletin, 2015).

02 Is the guilt moderate, specific and repairable?

Moderate guilt appeals produced more felt guilt than weak or strong ones, and stronger appeals worsened attitudes to the ad and the brand, driven by anger (Coulter and Pinto, Journal of Applied Psychology, 1995, n=60).

03 Is the problem put on a situation, never on the person reading?

Across 90 samples, shame went with constructive action when the failure was more repairable, and with less when it was less repairable (Leach and Cidam, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2015).

Eight consumer lines

Each is the Avoid mistake of one of the ten feelings.

Desire	Terms hidden behind a want: a "from" price few will get, fees at checkout, small print.
Excitement	A deadline that is not real, a countdown that restarts, a feature the product lacks.
Hope	A cure, a fortune or a best case promised to people who want it badly.
Belonging	Membership sold as a test ("a real fan has this"), and the national flag in commercial ads.
Amusement	A laugh at someone's expense: a group, a region, an accent, a rival, the viewer.
Duty	Duty enforced by public shame or threat, or a call with no act attached.
Love	Love measured by what was spent, or the product as the proof of care.
Compassion	Suffering staged for pity, the people helped shown only as helpless.

The law is the floor, not the standard

Saudi Arabia's E-Commerce Law (2019) prohibits electronic advertising with a false claim or wording that could directly or indirectly mislead the consumer (Article 11), and allows fines of up to SAR 1,000,000 (Article 18). An online ad is also treated as part of the contract.

The Flag Law (Royal Decree M/3 of 1393H) bars the national flag from use as a trademark or in commercial advertising (Article 15). The Ministry of Commerce said in September 2022 that the ban applies at all times, National Day included.

The voluntary ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code (2024) goes further: marketing should not mislead on origin or on the date of manufacture, which covers a founding year on a heritage pack, and should not play on fear without a justifiable reason.

One more test, from The Emotion Map. If a customer would feel manipulated on learning how an ad was designed, the ad needs redesigning.

VERDICT Use the feeling to help the customer decide, never to stop them thinking.

PART 06

Worksheet

Find the feeling in an afternoon

1. **Collect the words.** Google Maps reviews, comments and DMs, WhatsApp orders, complaints to the call centre. Their language, not your summary of it.
2. **Mark the feeling words and the moments.** Ramadan, payday, back to school, the match, the wedding. Consumer feelings often come with a date.
3. **Name the closest feeling, then test its neighbor.** Part 4 has the pairs. The neighbor is where the message changes.
4. **Give each asset one feeling.** One post, one feeling, one move.
5. **Add the one thing it needs next.** The terms, the date, the act, the path, or the brand inside the moment.
6. **Run the tests.** Part 5. Anything that fails a test does not ship.

Your brief, in one paragraph

MOMENT

What is happening in the customer's life

THEIR WORDS

What they say, from your reviews and messages

THE FEELING

One of the 34, and the neighbor ruled out

SAY

The move for that feeling

THE ONE THING IT NEEDS NEXT

Price and terms, a date, an act, a path, or the brand in the moment

TESTS

Fear with a step, guilt moderate, problem on the situation

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The library figures were counted on 25 September 2026 from the tags on all 6,480 ads and videos live on bmds.sa/library; each emotion page there shows the ads behind its count. Every research figure was checked against its primary source, or against the published abstract where the full text is paywalled. Several samples are small, several are lab studies, and most measure stated intent rather than sales; where that matters, the entry says so. BMD is not affiliated with Brené Brown or her publisher.

About BMD

Most companies don't have a marketing problem. They have a marketing department that was built to underperform. BMD is a boutique consultancy based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that builds structured, measurable marketing departments inside mid-market companies across the GCC. Its founder, Redha Alayesh, is a marketing consultant who has worked with 40+ marketing departments.

Keep going

- The Emotion Map: the 24 emotions behind B2B buying. bmds.sa/emotional-marketing-saudi-arabia
- The library's emotion pages: all 34 feelings, with ads doing each right and wrong. bmds.sa/library/emotions

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