



Psychological Theory of Reactance

Applied to increase student attendance at football games



Reactance Theory

- The threat or elimination of behavioral freedom motivates people to resist against said threat

How this works

- People want the freedom of choice, and when that freedom of a specific behavior is under perceived threat or taken away, the thing they are being denied increases in value. When a specific behavioral freedom is threatened or taken away from a person, they are more motivated to act upon this freedom than they would be if it were not under threat or denied.

Application

- When someone shows hesitation toward your idea or wants, deny them their ability to choose your offer or highlight that their freedom of choice has been taken away or threatened.

Applying this to SMU Football



- Promote the narrative that SMU football has yet to recover from receiving the death penalty in 1987.
- The death penalty tarnished SMU football's reputation and drained fans of all enthusiasm.
- People do not expect SMU football to succeed or their fans to be filled with the same passion they once were.
- Evoking feelings of being robbed of this experience and then encouraging students to prove naysayers wrong by showing the SMU students will not back down will increase attendance in games and student's passion the team.

Work Cited

Brehm, Jack W. “>Psychological Reactance: Theory and Applications: ACR.” *ACR North American Advances*, 1 Jan. 1989, <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/6883/volumes/v16/NA->.

Brehm, Sharon S., and Jack Williams Brehm. *Psychological Reactance: A Theory of Freedom and Control*. Academic Press, 1981.