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## TAKE TWO

**Grades:** 8 and up

**Time:** Two class periods, one week apart

**Materials:** 10-15 sample commercials targeted at teens; equipment to show the recorded commercials; copies of the plot synopsis and dialogue for each commercial; facts and statistics about the impact of marketing/branding on young people

**Relevant Subjects:** Social Studies, Language Arts, Theater, and Media Arts

**Preparation:** Record 10-15 commercials during prime time television viewing hours for several days. Choose commercials that are targeted at young people. Type up the plot synopsis and dialogue for each commercial on a separate sheet of paper, using the brand/product name as the title for each example.

1. Show the class a few of the commercials and have the group analyze each one and discuss questions such as:

- How does this commercial make you feel?
- Who is the intended audience for this commercial?
- Is anyone other than the intended audience likely to see this commercial? What impact might this commercial have on that audience?
- What is being sold?
- How do the images in the commercial relate to the product?
- What lifestyle is portrayed in the commercial?
- What type(s) of exploitation or oppression – if any -- are condoned, promoted or implied in the commercial?
- Is the commercial an accurate picture of reality?
- What does the commercial promise to the consumer?
- Who is represented/excluded in this commercial?
- What, if any, are the negative impacts of using or consuming this product – on the targeted audience? On other people? On other species? On the planet?

2. After analyzing a few commercials as a group, open the discussion to talk about the impacts of marketing and branding on young people. Include points about unrealistic body image, sex as a sales tactic, violence in advertising, wants vs. needs, the hidden oppression and exploitation of others, etc.

3. Break the students into groups of three or four. Give each group a commercial synopsis sheet and explain that they will be re-making these commercials to promote positive messages and healthy products. Groups should try to stick to the original commercial story lines as closely as possible, making subtle changes to subvert the commercial in a positive way. Explain that each group will perform their new commercials for the class the following week and explain what positive messages and products they are promoting.

**Alternative:** If the class has video capabilities, the groups could film their new commercials and screen the final results with the class.

4. Have each group perform or screen their new commercials.

5. Have the class discuss the positive changes and messages that they have created and how they'll use the knowledge they've gained to think more critically about the media messages to which they're exposed.

**Activity by Liberty Mulkani (M.Ed. Student)**