

WHITE SQUARE FESTIVAL - 25 FEB 2026



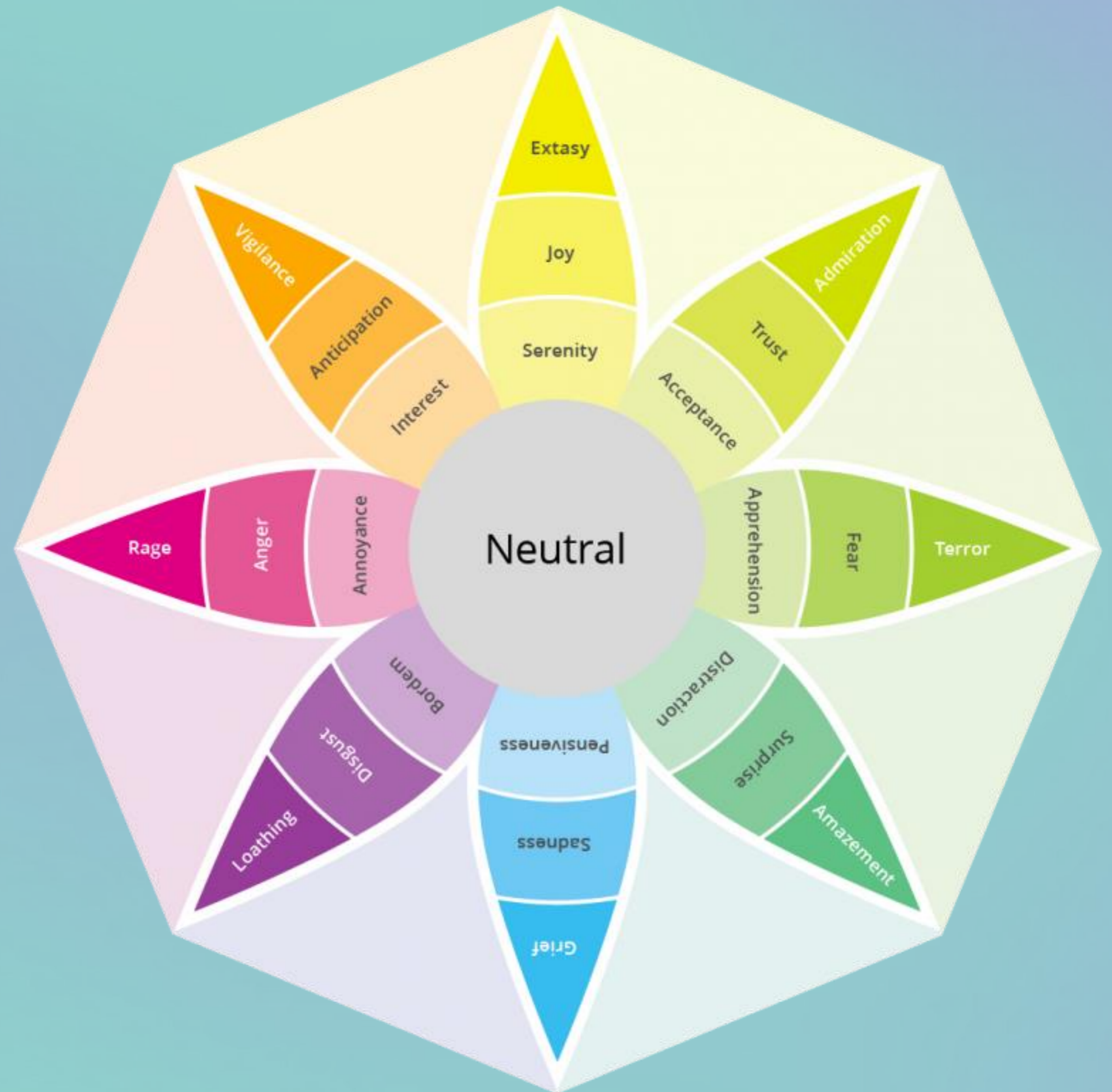
EMOTIONS

SELLS

A masterclass by Cinzia Pallaoro

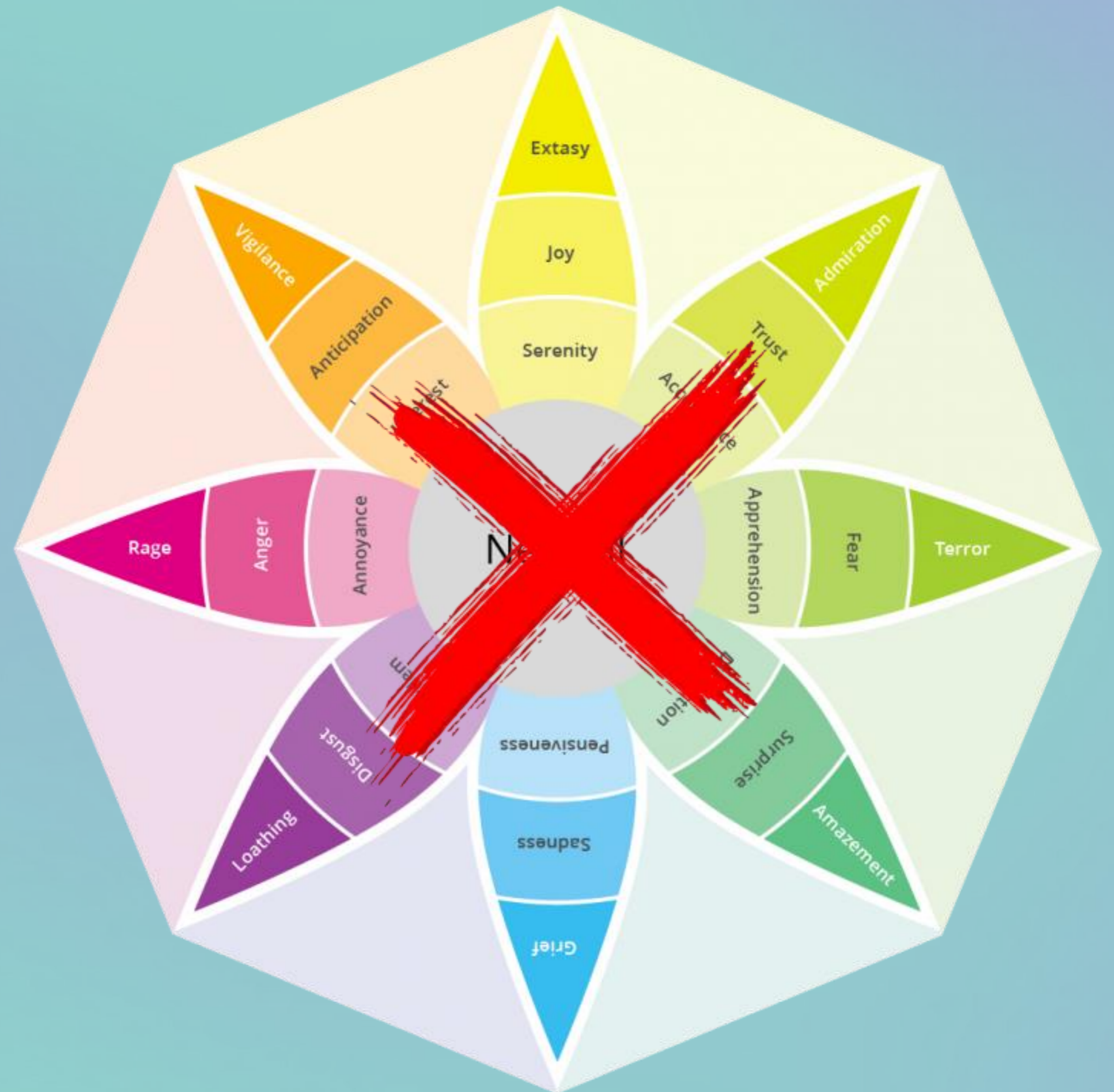
# THE THEORY OF EMOTIONS

There are **8 primary emotions** that have different intensity.



# THE THEORY OF EMOTIONS

**Neutral** is where a communication should never be.



THE ARENA OF EMOTIONS TRIGGERED BY COMMUNICATION IS VERY CROWDED.

WE ARE CONSTANTLY EXPOSED TO:

- Notifications
- Advertising
- News
- Social media
- Conversations
- Sounds
- Visual signals

***From a neuroscience perspective, our brain is always processing input.***  
Even in silence, it's interpreting internal signals (thoughts, memories, body sensations).



# NOT EVERY STIMULOUS CREATE AN EMOTION

Sometimes it just creates **attention**  
**or a slight arousal shift, or can be ignored.**  
**Consciously or unconsciously.**

Emotion arises when  
the stimulus is evaluated as **RELEVANT**  
**It connects to goals, identity, or memory.**



# WHEN YOU SEE A PIECE OF COMMUNICATION, YOUR BRAIN IMMEDIATELY ASKS:

- Is this relevant to me?
- Is it threatening?
- Is it rewarding?
- Does it connect to my identity?
- Is it surprising?

**That evaluation happens in milliseconds.**

If the stimulus is meaningful, *your brain activates emotional circuits.*

# EMOTIONS WITH HIGH PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTIVATION TEND TO CREATE MORE IMPACT

Emotions that connect to identity or personal stakes create deeper impact. Emotion such as:

Pride  
Shame  
Belonging  
Status  
Recognition  
Security





 Awe

*"I didn't expect that."*

 Defiant optimism


*Not naive hope — resilient forward motion*

 Empowerment

*Not "you can do it" — but "you already are"*

 Recognition

*"That's me."*

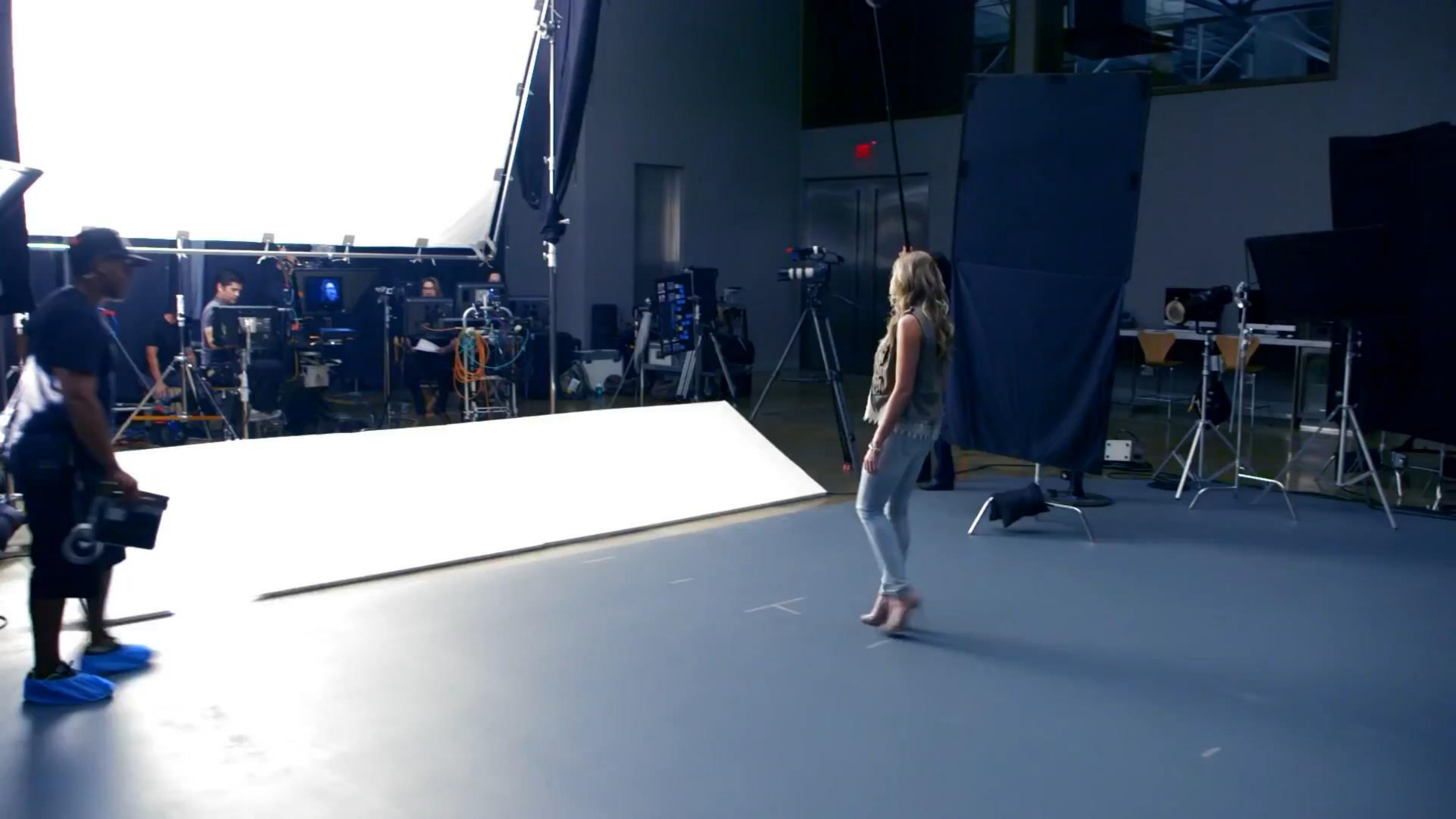
 Cultural relevance

*"They understand the moment."*









# WHAT DOESN'T WORK ANYMORE IN SATURATED ENVIRONMENTS:

Generic happiness → invisible  
Shallow inspiration → ignored  
Manufactured urgency → distrusted  
Constant outrage → exhausting





**nutella**  
FERRERO

Hazelnut Spread with Skim Milk & Cocoa

AND WHAT ABOUT NEGATIVE FEELINGS?

IN ORDER TO AVOID NEUTRALITY,  
IS IT OK TO AROUSE NEGATIVE  
FEELINGS?

SPOILER: NO.

Fear, Anger, Shock, Fast pacing, Threat cues rise the ADRENALINE Levels.

**Adrenaline is the hormone of fight-or-flight.**

If controlled, it rise the attention spike. However it's almost impossible to control the personal response to that stimuli, and it's easy to lead to  
TOO HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS.

That activation creates avoidance, distrust, refusal.

People can arrive to hate your brand and completely avoid your communication.

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We need donors and volunteers to help our cause.

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# I'M NOT HOMELESS, MY HOME IS RIGHT HERE.

Women and Children make up almost 40% of our homeless population.

SKID ROW a place  
LOS ANGELES called home

*To make effective communication it is fundamental to touch some kind of emotion, better if positive.*

*Positive feelings help building trust and bond between your brand and the audience.*

*Remember, in the current scenario,  
an emotionally neutral  
communications means waste of  
money and energy.*

*So always ask yourself: how will  
people feel about my  
communication?*