

Milk Helps Build Strong Bones?

Mr. Miller Never Drinks Milk— “Got Milk” Advertisement

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Advertisements exist in our daily lives everywhere: billboards, TV, Internet, radio, and magazines. Commercial or advertisement is a powerful tool that its creator uses to persuade audiences to buy the products, services or to accept an idea, government information or political opinion. In “Introduction to Media Literacy” the Media Literacy Project (n. d.) points out the following:

The goal of most media messages is to persuade the audience to believe or do something ... These "persuaders" use a variety of techniques to grab our attention, to establish credibility and trust, to stimulate desire for the product or policy, and to motivate us to act (buy, vote, give money, etc.). (p. 6)

One of the “Got Milk” (2009) advertisements “Mr. Miller never drinks milk” is the kind of advertisement used a diversity of techniques—plain folks, humor, fear--to persuade viewers to believe a myth that drinking three cups of milk a day will build strong bones. In fact, many studies show to protect bones need to keep the balance between providing calcium and keeping calcium in the bones, and drinking milk is not the only way to get calcium. Also, humans over-drinking milk will contribute to variety of diseases, such as obesity, cancer, fracture, and high cholesterol.

The advertisement “Mr. Miller Never Drinks Milk” provided by “Got Milk” campaign starts with a mom preparing the meal in the kitchen while her son and daughter are sitting at the table close to the window and eating breakfast. Mom turns her face to the kids and says, “Drink your milk,” her son respond with, “I don’t want milk. Milk is for babies.” Mom says, “Oh, yeah? Well, I happen to know that milk helps build strong bones. So, drink up.” Her son tries to provide

a good evidence and points forward to the outside of the window to the neighbor's backyard where a man with shiny gray hair about sixty-year-old is trying to move a wheelbarrow full of mulches, and the boy says, "Mr. Miller told me he never drink milk, look at him." And then the image moves to Mr. Miller who is lifting a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow is weighted too heavy and he cannot lift it up. Suddenly his arms break off and his two arms stay stuck holding on the wheelbarrow. He says, "This is not good." And the video moves back to the kitchen where the mom and kids saw what just happened to Mr. Miller and all start screaming. They look scared and grab the milk and drink fast. Finally, a voice states, "got milk?" and the text also shows the words.

The first scene of the advertisement is a real-life image: A mom preparing the meal in the kitchen while her son and daughter are sitting next to the table, which is close to the window and having breakfast. Mom tries to ask her kids to drink milk. Then the scene moves to the outside of the window where Mr. Miller, a senior white male, is working in his backyard. All figures in the ad are regular people as same with viewers. The "Got Milk" advertisement uses real-life image and technique--plain folks tightly connect the audience to the ad. As "Introduction to Media Literacy" (Media Literacy Project, n. d.) has noted, "Plain folks. (A type of Testimonial – the opposite of Celebrities.) This technique works because we may believe a 'regular person' more than an intellectual or a highly-paid celebrity" (p. 8). It gives viewers a rustic feeling and makes them believe everyone drinks milk. It suggests that if viewers do not drink milk, they will be left behind. Only small portion of the population on the planet drink milk. The others, due to limited resources and medical issues, do not drink milk.

As the camera focuses on the boy saying, "Mr. Miller told me he never drinks milk. Look at him!" to Mr. Miller breaking his arms and saying, "This is not good," the audiences see this

part and laughs. The ad uses humor to create a good feeling for viewers. As the “Introduction to Media Literacy” by Media Literacy Project (n. d.) says, “Many ads use humor because it grabs our attention and it’s a powerful persuasion technique. When we laugh, we feel good” (p. 8). The viewers will transfer the good feeling to the product--milk and it is easy to accept advertiser’s viewpoint that milk helps build strong bones. The viewers will consume more milk or more people will drink milk.

After humor brings happiness and relaxation, the screen turns scary. The camera moves back to the kitchen where the mom and children see what has happened to Mr. Miller, they all start screaming, and hastily grab a cup of milk and drink it. The ad uses another technique—fear- - to create a scene as if reader do not drink milk whatever happen to Mr. Miller will happen to them too. “Introduction to Media Literacy” has explained this skill: "Fear. This is the opposite of the association technique. It uses something disliked or feared by the intended audience (like bad breath, failure, high taxes or terrorism) to promote a ‘solution’” (Media Literacy Project, n. d.). The ad implies milk has a high level of calcium; thus, drinking milk is the only way to prevent or solute fracture problem. In article “Protecting Your Bones” by Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (2017) they state, “In order to protect your bones you not only need calcium in your diet, but you also need to make sure you keep calcium in your bones” (p. 1). The article also says the following:

While dairy products do contain calcium, they also contain animal proteins and growth factors, lactose sugar, occasional contaminants, and a substantial amount of fat and cholesterol (in all but the defatted versions), making them an unfavorable choice for obtaining calcium. (p. 1)

Therefore, drinking milk cannot keep calcium in human bones and has potential negative effects.

Before buying a product, accepting an opinion or taking an action, consumers should think about the part that is not portrayed in the ad first. As Dachis (2011) mentions, “Play devil's advocate and consider the negative aspect of the products that definitely aren't being shown to you” (Don't Forget to Think section). This “got milk” ad uses the genial image, humorous skill, and scary feeling to convey a myth that drinking milk prevents osteoporosis. The part it does not state is humans can gain calcium from sunlight, and plants, and that drinking milk is not a primary choice for building strong bones.

References

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