

Rise Above

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In our culture, advertising is an inevitable and effective strategy used to promote or sell a desired idea or product. Culture “provides the very sustenance of our self-understanding, our purpose, our meaning and our fulfillments” (Kavanaugh, 1986, "Cultural Ground," para. 1). Because advertisers know this, many of them turn advertising into a negative and dishonest way to sell something; they convey deceiving messages or falsify real life. However, there are still commercials out there that not only want to sell their product, but also promote positive messages and believe in the quality of their product. An example of this is Everlast’s boxing commercial called “Boxing Makes You Bigger.” In this ad, Everlast underscores the importance of self-discipline and rising above judgment as a focal point to sell their boxing gear.

Everlast’s goal is to sell their product. To do this, they want to “hook our attention through psychological devices and technical effects” (Lopez, 2014, p. 1). The ad begins by showing an adolescent African boy running through a poor neighborhood to get to an old boxing gym. In the next scenes, he’s frequently seen with a smaller boy (possibly his younger brother) who helps him intensely train or supports him on the sidelines. The boxer does a myriad of things: he jumps rope, conditions, practices boxing techniques by punching bags, works with his coach, and against opponents. Then it shows him competing in a boxing match in front of an audience, which he wins. After the match, he and the younger boy walk home. On the way, an older adolescent boy ambushes them, demanding money. The boxer hesitates, then ends up giving the stranger change. After the ambusher runs away, the younger boy asks the boxer, “Why didn’t you beat him up?” He responds by saying that the ambusher was hungry (Everlast, 2011).

There are many lessons to take from this commercial. It tells the story of hard work being the key to success. Throughout the training montage, the boxer practices routinely, showing the

level of dedication he has to boxing. He continuously trains day and night, despite the poor living conditions he's enduring. This is relevant to the message by not only promoting the product, but emphasizing the importance of working hard despite what other factors may be making it more difficult. Another issue the commercial addresses is speaking out against boxing stereotypes. In the ad, Everlast shows the boxer being kind and friendly towards his younger companion and the community around him after his boxing match. Many often classify boxers as brutal, violent people in and out of the ring. What society often sees is the marketing, and not the person.

The heart of the commercial is when the boxer decides to give the mugger money because he understood that the boy was also suffering from poverty. When the attacker suddenly cornered the boxer and the littler boy, the boxer's impulse was to defend himself and his companion. Knowing he could easily defeat the mugger in a fight, he still chooses to back down and give to the mugger. This is the climax of the ad because although the young boxer is a skilled fighter, he chose to avoid violence and show self-control and understanding. Because he is the main character, he sets a bar and is an example of maturity for viewers, especially those around his age.

According to Robert and Lichter (1988), if young people admit that their attitudes in real life are affected by what they see on television, their opinions of people on television are incredibly important to society ("Role Models," para. 1). If this is the case, commercials like this Everlast one are important. The boxer is the most important factor to the overall message because he shows a level of maturity and self-discipline all while wearing and using Everlast's boxing gear. This is how this company includes positive messages while promoting their product.

In today's world, statistics of violence have drastically gone down from where they used to be. However, that does not mean that violence and negative impulse reactions are erased. Violence and lack of controlling one's emotional state are still ongoing issues around the world. Everlast highlights the ideas of fighting against these problems rather than fighting against each other.

Everlast's bottom line is to sell their product, but instead of portraying a deceptive concept, they use a better message, which is to have self-control, and to think before resorting to violence. Additionally, they work against the negative stereotype of boxers. Fighting back is a common reaction from many in today's society. However, it is not impossible to raise awareness and decrease the amount of hostility we have against one another. Ultimately, in a minute and thirty seconds, Everlast was able to advertise their brand, but also show the value of rising above both physically and mentally.

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