Do Good Design

In his early twenties, David Berman began his work and passion as a graphic designer. His girlfriend at the time, with very strong feminist political views, showed him how graphic design can promote unsustainable practices and unhealthy products by making them look more visually appealing to consumers. Making things look appealing to consumers is of course the entire idea of marketing, but Berman set out on a mission to encourage good designers to promote good products rather than misleading consumers to encourage behaviors like having "exotic" fiji water shipped across the globe because the bottle is pretty.

Bad designs can also make a big impact on society. The 2000 Presidential election is a great example of this. The confusing layout of the ballot lead to people mistakenly voting for Pat Buchanan rather than Al Gore. This caused quite a controversy when George W Bush won by such a thin margin, and perhaps the outcome could have been different if the ballots were designed in a clearer manner.

It should come as no surprise that one of the major focuses in the book was tobacco advertising. With all of the laws and regulations around the advertising, display, sales, and consumption of tobacco, tobacco companies have needed to invest a lot of money into advertising their products in creative ways. In 2009 (when the book was published) it was estimated that big tobacco companies spend over $13 million in advertising their products, of course in hopes of getting people to try their product, get addicted, and continue to purchase their product. In 2015, you're not as likely to come across a cigarette advertisement anymore. There was however a time when billboards, TV commercials, magazine advertisements, and just about any media outlet you could think of included advertisements for cigarettes and other tobacco products. Of course because tobacco companies spent so much money on their advertising, tobacco was portrayed as a glamorous commodity that everyone can enjoy.

Berman also presents a list of shopping tips for agents of social change. The list encourages avoiding disposable items and rather keeping permanent versions on hand. Avoid bottled water and overly packaged food items, and try to resist the allure of good design and see the product for what it is. He encourages you to be aware of what's going on politically and vote for those who are willing to make changes to these unsustainable practices. He ends the list by encouraging you to spread these ideals to others to help actually make a difference in our society.

The final chapter encourages designers to not design for the sake of making something pretty, and to look further into a product and think about it's impact and what it stands for before helping it succeed. The First Things First Manifesto is essentially the

designers' hippocratic oath, and lays out a code of ethics that designers should always consider. Such practices will help designers have a more fulfilling career that they can truly be proud of. Berman also presents the reader with a pledge:

1.	I will be true to my profession.
2.	I will be true to myself.
3.	I will spend at least 10% of my professional time helping repair the world.

If you want to take this pledge head on over to https://www.davidberman.com/social/dogood/ and take the do good pledge!