

A video dictation

1. Watch a video of Derren Brown in an American shopping mall. What remarkable thing happens at the end and how did he do it?



Video link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOEKdaXIEHc>

2. Read the text below. Derren said something similar, but not quite the same. What do you think he said differently?

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Pallisades Mall. We hope that your shopping experience is an uplifting one and I'd like to bring to your attention some very special offers today. Details of our special offers can be found by the elevators, so why not come right on up and see for yourselves. Our special offers will only be available for a short period of time, so all those customers wishing to reach out and grab this exciting opportunity should do so now.

3. Listen again and try to spot the differences. When you spot one, tell your teacher to pause the recording and make a note of it.
4. So now you're looking at what Derren said, how do you think he did it?

Discussion questions

1. Do you think we go into a sort of trance in a shopping mall?
2. According to Derren, shopping malls are designed to:
 - disorientate
 - make us stay longer than we need to
 - manipulate us to buyDo you think it's true? And if so, how?
3. In what other places or situations might we be susceptible to subliminal messages?
4. Are there any useful ideas here that you'd like to employ in your working life? Or perhaps your personal life?

trance: a state in which you behave as if you are asleep but are still able to hear and understand what is said

disorientate: confuse and make us uncertain about what's happening around us

manipulate: make us do something by skillfully deceiving or influencing us

subliminal messages: messages that affect our minds in ways that we're not conscious of

Here's what Derren actually said. Embedded in the text (in CAPITAL LETTERS) are hidden commands.

We hope that your shopping experience is an UPLIFTING ARM, and I'd like to bring to your PAY ATTENTION some very special offers today. Details of our special offers can be found HANDILY by the ELEVATORS, so why not come RIGHT ARM UP and SEIZE for yourselves. Our special offers will only be available for a short period of time, so all those customers wishing to REACH UP and GRAB this exciting opportunity should do so NOW.

Handily: something that is handily placed is in a position where it can easily be reached or used: *She kept the key handily by the back door.* AmE: if you win something handily, you win easily

Seize: to take hold of something suddenly and violently. *Suddenly he seized my hand.*

Grab: to take hold of someone or something with a sudden or violent movement. *Kay grabbed hold of my arm to stop herself falling.*

Possible answers

It seems shopping malls might put us into some kind of trance and in that state we seem to be susceptible to subliminal messages. At the start of the video Derren Brown mentioned that:

- the recording was prerecorded and played throughout the shopping centre for about half an hour
- shopping malls are 'the perfect place' to find a large number of compliant people to affect.....

He often seems to raise his voice for the embedded commands, and there's a call to action in his final sentence – so he's not just telling them what to do, but also when to do it.

Further viewing

If you'd like to see more of Derren Brown, there are lots of other videos to watch at youtube. For example, you may enjoy:

Subliminal advertising Paying with paper Winning on a losing ticket