

How consumers continue enjoying their favorite experiences

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We've all experienced listening to a song until we can't stand it. A new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* may help people continue to enjoy the products and experiences they once loved.

Authors Jeff Galak (Carnegie Mellon University), Joseph P. Redden (University of Minnesota), and Justin Kruger (New York University) have discovered a quick and simple way to recover from satiation.

"We demonstrate that simply thinking about the variety of similar experiences one has had since last being exposed to the now-disliked stimulus accelerates recovery from satiation," the authors write. For example, if someone is sick of listening to her favorite song, she could think about all the other songs she has listened to since last listening to her favorite.

"Such simulations act as 'virtual' variety, providing much of the same reduction in satiation as actual variety," the authors write. "The reason this process works is because people suffer from what we term 'variety amnesia'; they tend to forget all of the variety they had in their lives and instead focus on how repetitive their experiences have been."

In three studies, the researchers proved that prompting people to think about variety helped them recover from satiation. In a pilot study, people were more willing to socialize with a close friend after thinking about all the other friends they had socialized with. In the next study, participants who listened to a song 20 times enjoyed it more three weeks later if they

thought about other songs they had listened to in the previous weeks. The third study replicated the findings with jellybeans. In all cases, the people who were prompted to think about variety of similar items (and not unrelated topics, like celebrities) recovered more quickly.

"If [consumers](#) wish to keep enjoying their favorite experiences, then they should simply think of all the other related experiences they have recently had," the authors write. "For example, the next time you find yourself in the all-too-common situation of not wanting to eat the same thing for lunch, try to recall all of the other things you have eaten since yesterday's lunch. Our findings suggest this will make your current lunch taste just a little bit better."

Source: University of Chicago Press Journals

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