Salutogenic Consumer Education

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Disclosure: I offer the idea of salutogenic consumer education for your consideration and comments. I tried and failed to have it published in several peer reviewed journals, but I am still convinced that the idea merits an academic and scholarly conversation. So I am placing it here as a scholarly monograph. My thanks to Dr. Daniel Fischer for inspiring me with this idea.

Cite as:
Abstract

This monograph makes a case for bringing a salutogenic perspective to consumer education. Antonovsky’s salutogenic theory is described: (a) a Sense of Coherence (SOC) (meaningfulness, comprehensibility, and manageability); (b) Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs); and, (c) a health ease/dis-ease continuum. The monograph then outlines what consumer education could look like through a salutogenic lens, including recommended pedagogical considerations. Challenging the pathology of a consumer society, a salutogenic orientation promotes the welfare of the person consuming, as well as anyone else, other species, and the environment. Taught early enough, students could graduate with a salutogenic orientation to their consumer behaviour, viewing consumption as meaningful, comprehensible, and manageable.

Keywords: consumer education, curriculum, salutogenics, sense of coherence, consumer society, consumer stress

Introduction

The term consumer education has been in use for over a century, evidenced by two papers at a 1909 home economics’ conference (Van Horn, 1941). The term entered the wider educational philosophy and curriculum lexicon in the late 1930s, albeit without a common, explicit definition (American Home Economics Association, and Home Economics Department of the National Education Association, 1945). Encouragingly, consumer educators have actively (re)conceptualized consumer education with curricular innovations (Green, 1988), helping it mature over the past century. McGregor (2015) identified 24 consumer education innovations that were developed over the last 50 years (Canada, United States, and Europe).

In that same innovative spirit, this monograph explores how consumer education could be reframed through the salutogenic perspective, which focuses on what promotes health rather than what causes illness (pathology) (Antonovsky, 1979). This reconceptualization is appropriate given the pathological nature of a consumer society (Fischer, 2012; McGregor, 2016). Actually, this curricular innovation was inspired by Fischer’s thoughts on changing consumer education so that people can learn to “think positively beyond consumption” (2012, p. 239). He criticized consumer education materials, resources, and curricula that propagate negative framings of consumption, especially “the hazardous consequences of consumerist lifestyles” (p. 239). Fischer believed this pathogenic approach, focused on unhealthy, detrimental consumer decisions, should be augmented (eventually supplanted) with a “positively oriented consumer education” (2012, p. 239), one that does not patronize learners, discourage them, or inculcate apathy.

Fischer (2012) proposed that instead of focusing on the problems, dis-ease, and barriers in
a pathological consumer society, educators should focus on opportunities, potentials, and resourcefulness. He felt that salutogenic-informed consumer education would help educators focus on what promotes healthy consumer decisions (instead of what causes harmful decisions). Health is Old English *hale*, a state of being whole, meaning completeness, unbrokenness, balance, and undamaged (Anderson, 2014). Healthy consumption behaviour would promote the welfare of the consumer as well as anyone else, other species, and the environment. A salutogenic perspective in consumer education would perpetuate strength, goodness, and well-being for everyone’s benefit.

The monograph begins with an overview of Antonovsky’s (1979, 1987, 1996) salutogenic theory, which includes two main constructs, (a) a Sense of Coherence (SOC) (meaningfulness, comprehensibility, and manageability), and (b) Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs), as well as (c) a health ease/dis-ease continuum. The application of this theory helps people to develop and embrace a salutogenic orientation to life (Antonovsky, 1996; Jensen, Dür, & Buijs, 2017). The bulk of the monograph shares carefully considered suggestions about what consumer education could look like through a salutogenic lens.

**Salutogenic Overview**

Pathology (Greek *pathos*, the study of suffering) is a branch of medicine that follows the typical trajectory of a disease. It is concerned with what causes disease rather than what promotes non-disease (Antonovsky, 1996; Dilani, 2012). In an effort to counter the pathological focus on disease prevention, a medical sociologist named Aaron Antonovsky (1979) conceived the new term salutogenic, focused on health promotion. Salutogenic stems from two words, salutary (Latin *salus*, “healthful and beneficial”), and genics (Greek *genes*, that which produces or causes genesis, emergence or creation). It refers to the creation and emergence of health, wellness, welfare, and well-being, so they can be sustained (Harper, 2017; Maschkowski, Schápke, Grabs, & Langen, 2016).

Salutogenic theory assumes that stress is omnipresent, not just a sporadic feature of, or an absence from, people’s lives. People must be able to deal with life’s pervasive stress and strains if they want to be healthy and adaptable (Antonovsky, 1987). Indeed, the impetus for his theory was the relationship between health, well-being, and stress. Presuming that stressors provide life challenges, salutogenics balances disease prevention (pathogenic) and health promotion (salutogenic) (Antonovsky, 1996; Becker, Chaney, Shores, & Glascoff, 2015).

**Health Ease/Dis-Ease Continuum**

To accommodate this balance, Antonovsky (1979, 1996) countered the prevailing one-sided pathogenic approach with the idea of a ‘health ease/dis-ease continuum’ (see Figure 1, used with permission from Jan A. Golembiewski). In this theory, dis-ease differs from disease. The
latter refer to impaired health. The hyphenated *dis-ease* represents the idea that the natural state of *ease* is imbalanced or disrupted, but not necessarily due to illness (Samuels, 2013). The concept of a continuum assumes people can move through a gradual transition from one condition to another, without any abrupt changes; yet, change subtly occurs. This theory assumes that by focusing on health promotion, practitioners can facilitate people’s movement along the continuum toward the health ease pole and an optimal state of well-being and quality of life (Becker, Glascoff, & Felts, 2010; Golembiewski, 2012).

**Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs)**

In addition to the continuum, salutogenic theory involves two key concepts: (a) Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs), in relation to Generalized Resistance Deficits (GRDs); and, (b) a Sense of Coherence (SOC), comprising meaningfulness, comprehensibility, and manageability (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987, 1996) (see Figures 1 and 2). Regarding the GRDs, the theory assumes that forces accumulate in people’s life making it hard for them to cope with stress. Examples of these forces (GRDs) include low self-esteem, low material resources, especially money, and poor health. Although these forces are often present in abundance, they represent a *deficit* because they weaken people’s ability to deal with underloads or overloads on their stress levels (Ellery & Ellery, 2015). To accommodate this assumption, Antonovsky developed the concept of GRRs, which facilitate effective tension management to deal with stress. GRR examples include money, social networks, hardiness, and learned resourcefulness (Lindström & Eriksson, 2006).
Salutogenic theory assumes that the use of GRRs leads to an accumulation of life experiences by which people learn to (a) identify resources (internal, external, material and nonmaterial), and (b) (re)use them (through readjustments) to meet life’s stressful challenges and realize life’s aspirations (Eriksson & Lindström, 2007; Mlonzi & Strümpfer, 1998; Strümpfer, 1990). Using these resources fosters repeated life experiences that give people strength, and help them see the world as making sense (Antonovsky, 1996). This GRR stockpile facilitates successful coping with the inherent stressors of human existence.

But, it is one thing to have resources at one’s disposal, or accessible in the immediate environment, and quite another to have the ability and inclination to perceive and use them. Antonovsky (1979) posited that people would be more inclined to do so if they sensed they could cope with, understand and manage the situation; that is, if they held a strong belief in available coping resources.

**Sense of Coherence**

Antonovsky (1979) consequently conceived of a Sense of Coherence (SOC) as a way to explain what is involved in people learning to see stressful situations as opportunities to grow and mature so they can move toward the health ease end of the continuum (by drawing on their GRRs). In lay language, coherent means orderly, logical, and consistent (Anderson, 2014). In this
theory, coupled with ‘a sense of’, coherence has a richer meaning. A sense of coherence is “a
generalized orientation toward the world which perceives it, on a continuum, as comprehensible,
manageable, and meaningful” (Antonovsky, 1996, p. 15). When confronted with a stressor,
people with a strong SOC (salutogenic life orientation) believe the challenge is (a) meaningful
(worthy of engagement, making them motivated to cope); (b) comprehensible (predictable and
explicable); and, (c) manageable (resources are available to cope with the situation) (see Figure
2) (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987). Their world coheres, meaning it firmly holds together in a
consistent manner.

Antonovsky (1996) explained that his version of a sense of coherence is a unique
contribution to health promotion theory because it combines motivational (meaningfulness),
cognitive (comprehensibility), and behavioral (manageability). This approach pushes beyond the
conventional, singular concepts of locus of control, self-efficacy, the will to live, empowerment,
and problem solving. Succinctly, “people have to understand their lives..., perceive that they are
able to manage the situation and deepest and most important perceive it is meaningful enough to
find motivation to continue” (Lindström & Eriksson, 2006, p. 241, emphasis added). GRRs are
presumed to “lead to life experiences that promote a strong SOC - a way of perceiving life and
the ability to successfully manage the infinite number of complex stressors encountered in the
discourse of life” (p. 241, emphasis added).

Put simply, they can face life’s stress, and know they will learn and grow from each
adverse situation. Meaningfulness is the most important element of a salutogenic life perception.
If people believe there is no reason to confront an adverse situation, they will have no sense of
meaning; hence, no motivation to cope with, comprehend or manage the event. They will have a
low SOC, which keeps them at the dis-ease pole of the continuum (Antonovsky, 1979). When
GRRs are perceived to be insufficient, people cannot cope well with life stressors (Smith, 2007).
When meaning, comprehensibility, and control are (perceived to be) lost, resistance to dis-ease
(imbalance) weakens, and a vicious circle ensues, replete with increased vulnerability and
anxiety. The chronicity of this stressful situation is pervasive and compelling, necessitating a
theory of health promotion (Golembiewski, 2010).

Salutogenic-Informed Consumer Education

In review, a sense of coherence builds confidence that (a) the problem is worth
addressing, (b) the situation is understandable, and (c) there is a good chance that things will
work out as well as can reasonably be expected; respectfully, life is meaningful, comprehensible,
and manageable. A SOC affects people’s perceptions of the stimuli that impact their daily lives
(i.e., a cacophony of noise or discernible input). People with a strong SOC have the ability to
bring available GRRs into play to address the challenge. Over time, as they repeatedly face,
(re)adjust, and learn from adverse and stressful situations, a GRR stockpile accumulates, reflecting life experiences that have promoted the development and maintenance of a strong life orientation, moving them along the health ease/dis-ease continuum (Antonovsky, 1987).

What would consumer education look like through a salutogenic lens? Contemporary definitions of consumer education view it as a socialization agent intended to orient people to their marketplace experiences (McGregor, 2015). How should consumer education curricula be changed or be augmented to reflect a salutogenic orientation and introduce students to the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum? In short, consumer educators would teach students how to (a) recognize a consumer decision as a stressful situation that merits their attention; that is, it is meaningful to them, and it would be satisfying to address the stress; (b) mentally grasp (comprehend) the stress-inducing issues specific to each purchase, which involves recognizing and processing a cacophony of information; and, (c) access their GRR stockpile to manage the stress, gaining maturity and consumer experience in the process, concurrently building a salutogenic orientation to the marketplace.

With a strong sense of marketplace coherence, people would progress along the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum, building up strength for and from each consumer encounter. Importantly, consumer educators would also teach students to recognize when aspects of their life (GRDs) hamper their ability to manage consumer-related stress; that is, the surplus of forces in life that have beaten them down and reduced their chances of facing (even recognizing) marketplace stress. Consumer educators would use this theory to teach students how to heed their feelings when confronting each purchase. The following discussion explains how this could be operationalized within a consumer education curriculum.

As a preamble, Figure 3 profiles the possible consequences of buying goods and services in the marketplace through free trade or fair trade, with coffee as an example. Free trade coffee perpetuates deep injustice for coffee bean farmers and labourers. It threatens the sustainability of their livelihood, family, and community. Agricultural practices are deeply harmful for the land, the environment, and other species, mainly because of dangerous fertilizers and pesticides. Most Northern consumers turn to free trade coffee unaware of the oppressive power of the consumerism ideology, and the neo-liberal marketplace. Conversely, fair trade coffee concurrently supports environmental sustainability (including biodiversity), and local farmers, communities, and workers. This support both helps ensure a living wage, and enables people to invest in local community building. Purchasing fair trade coffee also instills a sense of solidarity, and lessens the influence of the consumerist and neo-liberal ideologies (Jaffée, 2014).
Figure 3 Consequences of purchasing free trade and fair trade products or services

Using the information in Figure 3, consumer educators could help students move through the three dimensions of a sense of coherence (SOC) (meaningful, comprehensible, and manageable), so they can (a) access and enhance their GRR stockpile, (b) progress along the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum, and (c) foster the development of a self-sustaining salutogenic orientation to the marketplace (see Table 1, and the following text, for details).
They believe it is worthwhile to engage with the stress of the consumer situation, despite how deceptively benign and innocuous it may seem, and find satisfaction in doing so. They can see through the veil of the consumerism ideology.

They can make sense of the cacophony of conflicting information (noise) in the marketplace, fully understand the choices they are facing, and are convinced they can deal with the stressor (buy or not buy).

They believe there are resources at hand to manage the tension and alleviate the stressful purchase decision. They can live with the consequences, and will mature as a consumer in the process, strengthening their salutogenic orientation.

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**Movement along the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum**

Table 1 The health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum

**Meaningful Consumer Situation**

Salutogenic consumer education would teach students how to discern if they are motivated to even pay attention to the consumer decision in front of them (e.g., the cup of coffee). Does this decision *mean* anything to them? Do they think it is worthwhile to engage with the stress of the consumer situation (assuming they even view it as stressful)? If they do, the decision becomes important to them, because it has consequences.

In more detail, salutogenic theory holds that people respond to a stressful situation by seeking meaning. If they perceive it as meaningful, they will be predisposed to overcome the stress with dignity, because what happens matters to them. Salutogenic theory further posits that
with a sense of meaningfulness, people believe that things in life are interesting, and offer a source of satisfaction (Antonovsky, 1987). In order to move along the continuum when faced with the coffee purchase decision, consumers would have to decide that buying a cup of coffee is a meaningful consumer decision that is stressful due to its potential consequences, and that addressing it will be satisfying.

**Comprehensible Consumer Situation**

Having decided that purchasing the product or service is a meaningful consumer decision, the next step along the continuum is to figure out what is causing the stress (see consequences in Figure 3). Within salutogenics, comprehending the circumstances means people believe they can correctly understand the challenge being faced (see Figure 3). People with a low sense of comprehension perceive information about their immediate situation as disordered noise, making it very difficult to make sense of it. People with a high sense of comprehension assume that they can understand information and events in their life, reasonably predicting the consequences. Confidence in their ability to make sense of environmental stimuli (internal and external) helps them deal with stressors (Antonovsky, 1987, 1996). In this example, consumers would assume that a coffee purchase is a challenging situation for which they can find and process information (internal and external), and make sense of these stimuli.

**Manageable Consumer Situation**

With a strong sense of comprehension, people can move further along the continuum, and decide how to use their resources to manage the situation. Manageability is about control, being able to succeed despite difficulties (Anderson, 2014). Within the salutogenic approach, manageability refers to people’s perceptions that there are resources at hand, and that this GRR stockpile can be used to meet the demands of problematic or challenging situations. And, people presume they can handle the consequences. They welcome these challenges because they provide opportunities to learn, grow, and mature. People with a low sense of manageability tend to believe their life is not fair, they are victims, and they cannot cope with difficult situations or crises. Salutogenic manageability is behavioral (i.e., choices and actions) (Antonovsky, 1987). For this coffee scenario, consumers with a strong sense of manageability would draw on their stockpile of fortifying resources, fully cognizant of the consequences of whatever coffee choice they make.

**Dis-Ease End of the Consumer Continuum**

The salutogenic approach also helps consumer educators appreciate that people can move toward (or remain stuck at) the dis-ease pole of the consumer continuum when they encounter marketplace decisions. These people would have a weak sense of coherence (SOC), affecting how they process the purchase encounter. When faced with buying a cup of coffee, they would
not believe it is worthwhile to engage with the stress of the consumer situation. They might not see even this deceptively simple choice as stress-inducing (likely because they are unaware of the consequences, see Figure 3). Because it means nothing to them, they would not be motivated to mentally grasp the ethical and moral import of their consumer choice (i.e., comprehend the consequences). Thus, they would not see a need to manage the situation because it is meaningless to them (not stressful). They would buy the free trade cup of coffee without compunction.

Also, it is possible that their generalized resource deficits (GRDs) might kick in, influencing their decision to buy free trade coffee. In this case, examples of GRDs might include a lack of money to buy fair trade coffee, but more likely, these consumers lack ethical engagement with the marketplace, or any moral sense of responsibility to others when shopping. “Shopping is not good. Shopping is not bad. Shopping just is” (McGregor, 2008, p. 273). This amoral behavior reflects actions taken without awareness of, concern for, or intention to harming anyone or anything (i.e., moral consequences) (Collins, 1989). It would never occur to them that a coffee purchase is a stressful consumer decision. It is just a cup of coffee.

**Pedagogical Accommodations**

To ensure a strong sense of coherence in the marketplace, consumer educators need to help students navigate their feelings when encountering stressful consumer decisions (and help them appreciate that the nature of some purchases makes them stressful whether they realize it or not). If the aforementioned amoral behaviour is the case, the role of consumer educators would have to shift somewhat before they could begin to teach students about the salutogenic consumer continuum. They would have to teach them how to be responsible consumers and citizens. Exposure to this idea should make students more receptive to the tenets of salutogenic theory. Consumer educators are further encouraged to use other well-established ideas, including the strength-based approach, appreciative inquiry, and an abundance mentality. Gaining familiarity with these four pedagogical accommodations (plus others) may ease consumer educators into a salutogenic mind set, making it easier to teach this to students.

**Responsible Living Curriculum**

Succinctly, a responsible living curriculum emphasizes the ways in which ethical principles affect responsible decision making, especially consumer decisions (Schrader, Fricke, Doyle, & Thoresen, 2013; Thoresen, Didham, Klein, & Doyle, 2015). It includes a self-analysis as well as the analysis of complex world systems, and of attendant issues and problems. Students learn to consider the consequences of any decisions taken to address these issues (see Figure 3). They are taught ethical reasoning about right and wrong human conduct so they can live responsibly on the earth (General Education task Force, 2012).

These curricula would foster both the development of students’ consciousness and self-
control, and their prosocial behaviour (i.e., voluntary behaviour intended to benefit others). Students would learn to make responsible, informed choices so they can lead empowered, purposeful, and fulfilled lives. They would develop attitudes allowing them to concurrently take advantage of new opportunities, while confidently dealing with the stresses of uncertainty and change (Thuente, 1993). The principles of responsible living resonate strongly with the tenets of salutogenics.

**Strengths-Based Approach**

Consumer education often teaches students about needs and wants. Needs are essential or very important, and harm or distress ensues if they are missing or inadequate. Wants are things people desire but do not need (Bannister & Monsma, 1982). People need shelter, but how they meet this need can vary. They may want a penthouse but have to settle for a one bedroom apartment. The concept of needs is based on what is missing, deficient, or inadequate. The strengths approach acknowledges and privileges what is working instead of stigmatizing what is not working, or is missing or inadequate (Darybshire & Jackson, 2005).

It assumes it is more useful and helpful to use strengths as a way to further positive growth and development than to focus on weakness, deficiency, and dysfunction (per Fischer’s (2012) positive orientation to consumer education). Each person’s greatest room for growth is in their areas of greatest strength, not their greatest weaknesses. Personal power gained from the strengths approach helps people reflect on their situation, and commit to action and personal growth (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Darybshire & Jackson, 2005; MacFarlane, 2008; McCashen, 2005). The strengths approach would help consumers sustain the changes necessary to help them progress along the continuum. Especially, it respects the need to build on their strengths to bolster their GRR stockpile, which, when drawn upon and applied, leads to consumer experiences that promote a strong sense of coherence in the marketplace.

**Appreciative Inquiry**

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is so named because it refers to inquiry into new ideas, generated from people appreciating what is working already in their lives. Instead of focusing on problems (which salutogenics views as pathological), AI focuses on future-oriented inquiry (i.e., investigation and information seeking). Things are not solved; rather, they are outgrown. This can happen because the issue not solved loses its urgency, replaced with a new interest on the horizon, toward which people reach out, drawing on an inner reservoir of strength that someone has helped them discover. Much like the strengths-based approach, AI concerns what is already working rather than what is not working (Henry, 2003). It assumes that (a) people are responsive to positive thoughts and knowledge; (b) energy is created when imagining a different future, and that energy can drive the change needed to achieve that future; and, (c) if people can envision
what they want, there is a better chance of that happening (called the power of affirmations) (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

Although these principles are normally applied to collectives (organizations and communities), they provide useful insights when applied to individuals. Consumer educators can use AI principles to help students discover, understand, and learn from their positive, healthy consumer experiences. In the process, they would affirm and shore up their GRRs, and strengthen their sense of coherence in the marketplace. This affirming process would move them along the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum. Forward momentum would be further assured if consumers repeated the mantra (affirmation): “When I do good I feel good; when I feel good, I do good” (Henry, 2003, p. 2). This internalization would strengthen their SOC because it reflects their ability to see a consumer purchase as meaningful, worthy of attention, and satisfying when addressed. Once this insight takes hold, the other aspects of coherence can potentially kick in - comprehensibility and manageability (see Table 1).

**Abundance Mentality**

A fourth useful perspective is an abundance mentality. The consumer society is predicated on the principle of scarcity, meaning there is not enough to go around, so people have to compete for scarce resources, with winners and losers (i.e., win-lose thinking) (McGregor, 2016). Covey (1989, 1992) augmented scarcity mentality with abundance. He posited that life is more affirming for people when they assume ‘there is a lot to around that can be shared.’ An abundance mentality ensures that people do not assume resources are limited and must be controlled; instead, they assume people can share resources and collectively develop creative means to meet respective interests, without compromising future generations, the environment, or other species. An abundance mentality of win-win thinking counters the win-lose mentality of a consumer society.

Believing there is *plenty for everyone* helps consumers reorient themselves when shopping. Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions (McGregor, 2016), including consumer decisions. Win-win thinking would mean that consumer decisions are presumed to be *mutually* beneficial and satisfying. Consumers would get what they need or want, and labourers would not be unduly harmed, disempowered, or undermined in the process. If consumer educators can help students *comprehend* their consumer choice through this win-win lens, consumers would process internal and external stimuli differently when making consumer choices. With this comprehension, they could then choose to draw on their GRRs to manage any stress or tension associated with a consumer purchase. Consumer educators can use the abundance mentality perspective when teaching students how to move along the health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum.
Summary and Conclusions

Salutogenics (especially a sense of coherence) is understood to be an umbrella concept, which encompasses empowerment, well-being, self-efficacy, quality of life, resilience, and action competence (Lindström & Eriksson, 2010). Schools and educators that strive to bring a salutogenic perspective into the curriculum appreciate the scope of this idea. As people struggle with life stressors, they draw on their GRRs or are hampered by their GRDs. If schools can help students win that struggle more often, their sense of empowerment, efficacy, well-being, and resilience would be augmented (Jensen et al., 2017). Consumer educators can take inspiration from this idea.

This monograph presented and developed the idea of healthy consumption behaviour that does not harm the self, others, the environment, or other species. It refined the salutogenic continuum idea to form a health ease/dis-ease consumer continuum, relevant to educating consumers because it assumes people will gradually transition from one condition or state to another. As well, Antonovsky (1987) presumed that a sense of coherence accumulates over time, with people gaining stability as they mature. With early school exposure, consumer educators have a rich opportunity to help students develop a salutogenic orientation to their consumer life in early adulthood (see Jensen et al., 2017).

To progress along this continuum, away from consumer dis-ease in the marketplace to being at ease with their consumer choices, the monograph then presented the notion of a sense of coherence in the marketplace, replete with meaningful consumer situations, comprehensible consumer situations, and manageable consumer situations (see Table 1). Both types of resources are accommodated, those that (a) help consumers resist and overcome marketplace stress (GRRs) and (b) weaken their ability to do so (GRDs). Per the tenets of salutogenics, consumers would constantly (re)adjust their consumer behaviour as they draw upon and replenish GRRs, gradually moving along the continuum. Eventually, they would develop a predominately healthy attitude or predisposition toward privileging others and the environment when making consumer choices. These consumers would be shored up (strengthened and affirmed) by their emergent salutogenic orientation to consuming, making this sort of behaviour self-sustaining.

Finally, consumer educators are encouraged to augment their current educational philosophy with four additional ideas: responsible living, the strengths-based approach, appreciative inquiry, and an abundance mentality. These approaches respect salutogenic’s assumption that, with positive life experiences, people can shore up resources that help them resist stress, and they can (re)use these resources to promote and exercise a sense of coherence in the marketplace. Over time, they can develop a salutogenic orientation to their consumer behaviour, meaning they perceive their consumer world as meaningful, comprehensible, and
manageable. This salutogenic orientation positions them closer to the health ease end of the continuum, which benefits them, other people and species, and the environment. The health of everyone and everything is better ensured if students are taught to see themselves engaged in sustainable, satisfying, healthy consumption behaviour, made possible from a salutogenic perspective.

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