

**Shrink Rap Radio #112, September 23, 2007, The Commercialization of Childhood  
David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Allen D. Kanner,  
Ph.D.**

(Transcribed from [www.ShrinkRapRadio.com](http://www.ShrinkRapRadio.com) by Susan Argyelan)

**Excerpt:** *The Bratz dolls have to do with selling sexuality, basically, to preteen girls and boys, with the girls being a bigger target here, and that, of course, is getting younger and younger and younger, so that you have Disney mermaids on toddlers’ underwear. And you have thong underwear that’s sized for seven-year-old girls. And it just goes on and on, and these girls are not any more sophisticated on an emotional level, sexually, than girls who are 20 to 200 years ago, but they do know that it’s something that older girls and adults do. And there’s a lot of taboo around it, so it’s all very exciting, and of course they’re attracted to it. But the message is a very sexist one, which is basically, “Your worth is tied to how sexy you are.”*

**Introduction:** That was the voice of my guest, Allen D. Kanner, Ph.D. Allen Kanner is co-founder of the [Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood](#), co-editor of the books [Psychology and Consumer Culture](#) and [Ecopsychology](#). He’s also a Berkeley, California-based child, family, and adult psychologist. He’s a leading figure in the field of ecopsychology and has written extensively about the commercialization of childhood. Recently, Allen has started writing a column for [Tikkun Magazine](#) on the corporatized society. Now, here’s the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Dr. Allen Kanner, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Allen Kanner:** Thank you. It’s great to be here.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, it’s great to have you. And I know that you’ve been very active in trying to get psychology to take a stand against the growth of corporate marketing to children. And before we get into the role that APA and psychology as a profession might play, I’d like to have you take us through the problem as you see it. What’s the issue here around the marketing to children?

**Kanner:** Sure. The issue, in a certain way, is, why do we need to do it at all? The huge amount of marketing to children that we are now witnessing is a fairly new phenomenon. It didn’t really get going until the mid-80s, when marketers discovered that children had far more discretionary income and far more influence on their parents’ spending than anyone had imagined. And then from that point on, it’s just skyrocketed, so that in 1983, U.S. companies spent about \$100 million advertising to children. In 2005, the figure had reached \$16.8 billion.

**Dr. Dave:** Wow! That...talk about a skyrocketing change of budget, that’s a pretty big difference.

**Kanner:** Yes. And so while that was going on, the amount that children have been spending and the amount that their parents have been spending has also been steadily and dramatically climbing, so that that figure in the United States, in terms of how much children are spending or influencing, is now about \$600 billion. And worldwide, it's over a trillion. So this is not a trivial amount of money that we're talking about anymore. In the meantime, the marketing itself was initially aimed at teenagers, and it's gotten younger and younger. So then it went to preteens, or what the marketers call "tweens." That's the term they made up...

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Kanner:** ...and that's roughly age six to 14. And much more recently, in the last two or three years, it's dipped down now into infants and toddlers, with the youngest targets being about four months old.

**Dr. Dave:** Now, how can you market to a four-month-old? (laughs) Or are you talking about the marketing that's being beamed at parents in terms of, like, Baby Mozart, and trying to get parents to enrich their child's environment?

**Kanner:** The videos that are being sold for infants and toddlers – and also some of the TV shows and cable programs that are out there – are aimed at children predominantly from six months on up to around two years, or sometimes, as young as four months. What the marketers are learning from their research is that children can recognize logos that young, and then when they begin to speak, they start to ask for McDonald's and other products. So the capacity to start to influence very young children is perhaps shockingly low, but it's there. And then, the marketers have gone for it in quite a gung-ho fashion. So the question, then, becomes...well, there's several questions. One of the main questions is, is this fair? Marketers are these very skilled, intelligent people with huge resources at their command, and they are manipulating youngsters, and certainly youngsters who are one or two years old. I mean, they don't have a chance. And as we know from cognitive research, young kids, until they're about eight or nine, don't even have the capacity to understand what a persuasive argument is all about. And that means that they don't understand the intention of somebody who's trying to sell something to them. They just simply believe them, and they don't fathom the manipulation, and they're cognitively not really prepared to do that yet. And of course, that's only one kind of manipulation that we're talking about. And even as we get up to the 14-, 15-, 16-year-olds, they are less cognitively sophisticated than adults. So that's one big question: Is it fair to be doing this, for these adults to be coming at children with everything that they have in rather unscrupulous ways? So that now we're even getting "buzz marketing" as it's called, the kind of marketing where children don't even know they're being advertised to.

**Dr. Dave:** What did you call that?

**Kanner:** "Buzz" marketing (inaudible) stealth marketing...

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, buzz or stealth marketing, okay.

**Kanner:** Yeah, they have different terms. So there's a company called the [Girls Intelligence Agency](#) that...

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I was fascinated by that. I read an article that you wrote called Globalization and the Commercialization of Childhood, and in there, you talk about the GIA, which sounds like the CIA. Go ahead and tell us about that. (laughs)

**Kanner:** So what the GIA does is, basically, it's hired by corporations that want to introduce products to girls. And it has a group of girls around the country which it calls its "agents." And they range from six- to 11-years-old or so. And they don't get paid by the company but they get some free products. And what they do is, they set up slumber parties for up to about 11 of their friends and pass out the free products to their friends, meanwhile, taking notes on their friends' reactions to the products and other things their friends are talking about, such as who's popular right now, or, what are the girls really interested in? So basically, these girls are spying on their friends in order to help GIA and the people who hire GIA introduce their products. And this is the kind of stealth marketing now that's becoming more and more popular. And as I said, it's a very severe manipulation in that the kids don't even know that they're being sold to. They think they're going over to a friend's party because a friend likes them, wants them there.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, wow. I know the same kinds of techniques are being brought to bear against adult populations.

**Kanner:** Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** And GIA is probably a marketing-strategy research kind of company. Because of my own involvement in the world of market research, I'm familiar with some of this kind of thing, where a company like that will have a panel. So it sounds like they have what they would call a panel of really young girls, and to engage in this sort of stealth marketing that you're talking about, or buzz marketing, which is even questionable with adults, I have to say... But I agree with you about the questionability of when you start applying this to young kids, who haven't reached the stage in their cognitive development to have any kind of critical facility. And your story of the GIA reminds me of a time when I was in Chicago some years ago – actually, to do market research – and I stumbled into a huge department store there that I'd never heard of. But it looked kind of interesting, so I went inside, and it was called American Girl. And it was this huge department store totally dedicated to a line of dolls called the American Girl doll. And they had clothing ensembles, that the little girls and the dolls could wear the same clothing, and I think the girls' mommies could wear the same clothing, so that the whole "family" could wear the same clothing and have the same accessories. And they had all of these, what they would call "lifestyle areas" around this concept and a restaurant where they could have tea parties. And the place was absolutely packed. This was

some years ago, and it sounds like what you're describing is, it's being ratcheted up evermore.

**Kanner:** Yes, and the largest-selling doll now is called the [Bratz doll](#). It's outselling Barbie. And they're very sexualized figures that are being sold, or marketed to, young girls. And so it's...

**Dr. Dave:** Well, they look like little hookers, right?

**Kanner:** Mm-hmm, yeah...that's what... They've been described that way.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Kanner:** Tramps.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Kanner:** That's... There's a whole slew of what I consider "content areas" of marketing – and by that, I mean, what is being marketed – that is basically bad for kids. And if you take the six or seven largest kinds of items or areas of sales that exist, you'll find that every single one of them is bad for children. So the most well known, and what children buy the most of, is junk food. And now, of course, we have an obesity crisis in this country...

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Kanner:** ...with a rise in not just (inaudible) but obesity-related diseases such as diabetes, and then, of course, a rise in cavities, and a host of other illnesses. And that's just one of them. Another area is violence, so there's been a huge explosion not just of the amount of violent media being sold to mostly, primarily to boys, but how gruesome the videos and the movies and whatnot are... the degree of violence keeps getting worse, as it were, because the companies keep trying to outdo each other to get the boys' (?) attention. The Bratz dolls have to do with selling sexuality, basically, to preteen girls and boys, with the girls being a bigger target here. And that, of course, is getting younger and younger and younger, so that you have Disney mermaids on toddlers' underwear, and you have thong underwear that's sized for seven-year-old girls. And it just goes on and on. And these girls are not any more sophisticated on an emotional level, sexually, than girls who are 20 to 200 years ago. But they do know that it's something that older girls and adults do, and there's a lot of taboo around it. So it's all very exciting, and of course, they're attracted to it. But the message is a very sexist one, which is, basically, "Your worth is tied to how sexy you are." And so...

**Dr. Dave:** How paradoxical that that should be happening on the heels of the whole feminist revolution that we supposedly went through.

**Kanner:** Right. In fact, the feminist revolution has kind of slipped into this in a distorted way, because this is the kind of “loosening up,” or you’d be a prude if you object to this kind of marketing. And there’s a phrase that the marketers use, that “Kids are getting older, younger” – KGOY. I think in the case of the girls, it could be that the kids are getting objectified younger. But the idea there is that the marketers are saying the children are much more sophisticated than they used to be, and therefore, it takes much more sophisticated kinds of advertising to reach them. If we unpack what “sophisticated” means, we find out that it means “manipulative,” that it takes much more subtle manipulation now to get to these kids who, to some degree, have become skeptical or cynical about marketing, because they’ve been exposed to so much of it. But it’s the marketers’ fault that this is happening at all, and it’s not like the children are getting sophisticated in any kind of desirable way. They’re becoming more cynical about the public world and what they’re exposed to there, and if it’s getting more difficult to get to them, it’s certainly not so difficult that the marketers are failing, because as I was mentioning, every year, the amount that children are spending is going up. So these adults can continue to fool the kids, even as the kids become a little bit better at seeing through what’s going on. But do we want our children to feel the cynicism? Do we want them to mistrust the public or the adult world that surrounds them? And, is this something, as a society, that we want to sanction so that these companies can make bigger profits?

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you talk about the commercialization of childhood, and the kind of childhood that you’re describing is so different than the childhood that I came up in...

**Kanner:** Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** ...in which I played in vacant lots, and we played baseball and hide-and-seek and kick the can, and (laughs) relatively innocent pastimes such as that. And of course, we had sports heroes and wanted to buy trading cards with their pictures...

**Kanner:** Right.

**Dr. Dave:** ...and ate cereals so that we could get the little prizes that were inside the box. But it does seem like things have really gotten scaled up, and so when you talk about the commercialization of childhood, I think you’ve been touching on this; maybe the question is redundant. But, what do you mean by that phrase?

**Kanner:** What I’m saying right now is, as one of my colleagues, Susan Lind (?), likes to say, “Children are being marketed to from the time they get up to the time they go to bed.” And so, the assault, which has moved from Saturday-morning cartoons and cereal boxes, which is what we grew up with, to just about every aspect of children’s lives, any time they go to a public place where people expect them to show up, there’ll be a lot of marketing aimed at children. And it could be a concert, a circus – it doesn’t matter what it is, they’ll be inundated now with marketing.

Marketing has made huge inroads in our schools, and I could certainly talk some more about that. But the overarching point is that it's just constant, and it's ubiquitous, and it's increasingly sophisticated, so that these children are growing up with the message that if you're going to be happy, you need to buy all these things and continue to buy. And there's a whole set (?) of materialistic values being inculcated in this respect in a way that just wasn't happening before.

**Dr. Dave:** Let me ask you, just to back up a little bit, how did you come to be interested in this as an issue?

**Kanner:** A number of years back, I was very involved in helping to get an area of psychology, ecopsychology, off the ground. And one of the questions I was very concerned about as an ecopsychologist was why are we just (inaudible)? And from a psychological perspective, most environmentalists would agree that the two major forces behind environmental destruction are first of all, consumerism and the population explosion. In terms of the first role (?) of consumerism, sort of clean up our own act before we look at others. What I was then wondering about was a long tradition of research that's now gone on in many, many countries that shows that once people's basic needs for clothing and housing and whatever are met, there's very little relationship with how much money they have or how wealthy they are and how happy they are. So, it's not making people happier to accumulate all this stuff. So the question I was wondering is, well, why? And that brought me to the marketing. And I was interested in adults also, but as I was looking into this – I'm a child and family therapist – it was near the time when this marketing to kids was taking off. So I became very concerned about what I was seeing there as well.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you talk about many countries, and you say this is happening in other countries. And you actually link it to the process of globalization. Maybe you can say something about that.

**Kanner:** Yeah, I'd be happy to. Economic globalization, which is being driven by these international organizations like the W2 TO(?) World Trade Organization, and the World Bank is basically an attempt to allow multinational corporations to go into any country they want around the world and to sell their products without any interference from the local or the national government. And so anything that does interfere is considered a barrier to trade, such as a tariff. And this is being dismantled, as it were, by the WTO and these other organizations. So as this brand of capitalism and corporate capitalism is spreading, and the economic system is spreading, part of what's happening is the result that our national corporations are bringing in their marketing to children, into India and China and Brazil and these other huge and relatively untapped markets. So we're seeing in all these countries many more TV stations devoted to children and much more marketing in general aimed at young populations, and so we're starting to see the same pattern of the spending going up, both in the marketing and in how much the children are spending or influencing. All of this is happening much faster than in the United States because the corporations already have everything in place. They have their

market research, and they have the media all set up to go in, so the whole process is happening much more quickly. And as I was mentioning earlier, a meta-message of advertising – and this is true for adults, too – but it’s certainly (inaudible) children is that materialism’s the way to happiness. But with the big corporations doing the vast majority of the marketing, what we’re really getting is a much more specific message, which is that it’s corporate products that are the key to happiness in life. It’s not just any old “stuff...”

**Dr. Dave:** Mm-hmm...

**Kanner:** ...any old material goods. It’s the Nikes, and it’s the McDonald’s and Nintendo... it’s the corporate sheen or image that goes along with the products. So very often – and this is called “branding” – the kids are *as* interested or *more* interested in owning the corporation’s product than the product itself. Over time, what kids bring from this is the idea that they need corporations in order to be happy. They need this giant economic system that’s taken over the world right now, and this is a “good thing.” It’s what’s... Part of the image that’s being sold is that the world is going to be united through all of us having the same running shoe.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. The United Faces of Benetton, or the United Colors of Benetton, that brings to mind, as one example of that.

**Kanner:** It’s the Utopian image that if we all own the same things, this is going to, this is how we get world peace and paradise.

**Dr. Dave:** But we’re seeing this terrible... I had to drive to Stockton the other day, about a three-hour drive. And it was exactly the same in Stockton as it is in my neighborhood here, the same chains. You know, they offered to take me out to lunch, and they said, “Would you like to go to Chili’s or to Applebee’s or to...?” (laughs) And there were the same dreadful chains that are in my neighborhood. And it doesn’t matter if I drive to Stockton or if I drive to Kansas, I’m going to be encountering the same elements of what is increasingly, seems to me, like a monoculture virus that’s spreading across the face of the earth, where there’s a sterile, deadening sameness! What’s the point of travel if it’s all the same?

**Kanner:** Exactly. So the monoculture is a commercial monoculture: it’s based on the products of these multinational corporations. And I agree with you that to the extent that they’re successful, they’re going to homogenize the world’s cultures. Or the differences are going to be kind of trivial. And, as I also was mentioning, children are growing up with this image – as an exciting future – that we’re all going to own the same computer, we’re all going to be buying the same clothes, and this is a cutting edge for the human race. And I’m saying that whether it’s intentional or not, one of the effects beyond all these bad products that are being marketed to children is this meta-message that economic globalization – the monoculture – is the answer to our prayers.

**Dr. Dave:** And I guess some people would regard you as unpatriotic for even saying that, because we're told that our economic survival – our very survival – is dependent upon us having a well-functioning marketing machine that keeps the whole capitalistic flow of money flowing. And certainly, I don't want to suddenly be poor. (laughs)

**Kanner:** Right. Neither do I. And certainly that's not what I'm advocating, or people who have similar views. The accusation of being unpatriotic is, I find that a little amusing. I mean, I believe in democracy, and capitalism often gets in the way of democracy. So, I find that the people who want this kind of severe capitalism really don't believe in democracy. The WTO can make decisions that can override laws passed by the U.S. government if they're deemed to be a barrier to trade. I keep waiting for something to happen that's going to hit the papers in a big way around this. Most people don't even know this is true. But if Brazil sues the United States or Mexico because we ban tuna fish, or something of this sort that's been caught in a certain way, and wins, then the United States either has to pay a huge fine – a crippling fine for the industry – or it would have to change its laws. So this is not democracy at work...

**Dr. Dave:** And it's also not the free market, that people like to say, "Oh, we have to protect a free-market economy." We're not even close to having a free-market economy.

**Kanner:** No, we're not. And of course, competition now – say, among media, you can't break in. It's just too expensive, and you have to own media in too many different areas. You have to own computers and TV and movies and video and whatnot. So there's many ways where this system is very unpatriotic in terms of our democracy. But I'd also like to mention that it's completely unsustainable. It's going to use up all the resources that we have. We can't keep growing at this phenomenal rate, and I think people who are within the system just hope for some technological miracle that will, somehow or other, save us. But in terms of the long view of what's good for the country and what's good for the world, a system that is hell-bent on using up every last drop of resources that we have on the planet for short-term profit is, in my view, incredibly unpatriotic. And if they're willing to sacrifice our children's health and their values and their general wellbeing along the way, that doesn't make me think better of them. It doesn't make me think that they're very patriotic.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, I think there are people who – rightly or wrongly – would argue with you about how sustainable this all is, and that new technologies will emerge that will make it be more sustainable, and you're just a cry-baby and a scaredy-cat. (laughs) Those kinds of accusations.

**Kanner:** Mm-hmm.

**Dr. Dave:** But the thing about branding to children and marketing to children... It's hard to see how anybody of good conscience and any kind of long-term viewpoint

could see that as ultimately a good thing. As I was reading your article – and I work in the world of branding – but a new image of branding popped into my head. Marketers focus a lot of attention and money on building their brands. And of course, you're right that they want to establish these brand associations in young consumers: the younger, the better, from their point of view.

**Kanner:** Right.

**Dr. Dave:** So, in essence, I mean I'm seeing the word "branding" differently because in essence, it's almost like cattlemen burning their brand into the hides of cattle. Marketers, more and more, are seeking to burn their brands into the brains of children.

**Kanner:** Yeah, they use a cradle-to-grave brand loyalty, which is interesting. You know, the word "loyalty." "Loyalty" usually means something that's deeply heartfelt. But that is a big part of marketing to children, is to hook kids early and then, for the rest of their lives. Partly now, we're seeing a lot of adult products advertised to children for that reason. Believe it or not, real-estate companies are marketing to children, and we certainly see gasoline companies – you know those little cute cars in the gasoline ads? And beer ads with frogs? So, the idea is not that the children are going to necessarily buy these products now, but they'll nag their parents to get them, so that they'll influence the adult spending. But also, as they get older, they'll be loyal to the brand. And we all have jingles that we remember as kids.

**Dr. Dave:** We certainly do. I remember going away to college in a different part of the country. And I think often, this is kind of a bonding ritual among young adults, of remembering back in childhood, kind of comparing brand memories.

**Kanner:** Yeah, and people your age will have the same memories.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and then you feel, (laughs) you get all excited, and there's almost like a Freudian dimension here. Because Freud had the insight, and the psychoanalysts had the insight, of how terribly formative the early years were for shaping the personality. And there's a well-known French psychoanalyst – I can't remember his name – but he consults to major corporations, and as part of his methodology, he regresses people back to childhood and explores their earliest associations and memories and smells, and so on, in order to help companies then latch on to these for their branding.

**Kanner:** Right. Well, now you're moving...if you'd like to, we could talk about the ethics of psychologists participating in marketing research.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. Because you're a psychologist...

**Kanner:** Right.

**Dr. Dave:** ...and I know you've been trying to move this issue to the forefront for the American Psychological Association. So maybe you can speak about your efforts and what frustrations and successes you've met so far.

**Kanner:** Yeah, and I think the starting point is that this kind of consulting is ethical, or at least it's not unethical, in terms of APA. I'd like to start off by basically reminding people of how we get our knowledge about people. And one of the ways is they come to our office when we're therapists, and they open their hearts up to us. And they reveal their most intimate secrets. And the idea is that we're going to help them and we're going to take this knowledge in general to help people. The other major source of knowledge is research. And here we get volunteers who believe that they are spending their time and effort because we're going to use this knowledge to help humankind, to advance our general understanding of how people work. So, when a marketer hires us and says, "How can we manipulate children in order to sell to them?" and "We're really not going to pay attention to any of the side effects. So if we find out that making them feel like dorks," as one marketer said, "if they don't buy the product" – and that's a very powerful way to children's minds and hearts, is to shame them and make them feel "uncool" or out of it – "then we'll go forward with this because it works." So this is selling out, this very precious knowledge that we have, for a kind of an... Well, it's for a purpose that has nothing to do with helping people in that in many, many cases, in fact, harms people. And so I basically think this is unethical. And I helped Jay Ruskin (?) collect signatures for a letter he had written. [Gary Ruskin](#) was the director of Commercial Alert, one of Ralph Nader's groups. And Gary had written a letter asking APA to consider making this kind of consultation unethical. And we got around 40, 50 signatures, and we sent it to APA and got quite a lot of news coverage from USA Today and the New York Times and whatnot. And that resulted in APA setting up a task force that I consulted with. And it turned out that for technical reasons, APA couldn't make it unethical. I'm not going to go into it, but it has to do with the fact that other therapists – say, like psychiatrists and social workers – wouldn't be held to the same standard, and that would be an unfair trade advantage (that) would be given to these other professions.

**Dr. Dave:** Oh, gee.

**Kanner:** (inaudible) crazy because we're back to this trade issue. But they didn't do that. They did come out recommending that marketing to children eight and under... We wanted them to, say "ban," and they didn't have the political will to say "ban," but "be restricted." And still, that's a powerful statement that APA is coming out and saying, that the marketing is unfair and harmful enough that it ought to be restricted to children of this age. So that was a positive outcome.

**Dr. Dave:** But that needs to get translated into legislation to have any real meaning, doesn't it?

**Kanner:** It would. It forms some of the basis for future legislation. I think it may also, to be said that psychologists who are being trained know about this, it may discourage them, at least, from going this way.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. I hope so.

**Kanner:** But in the meantime, most corporations routinely hire psychologists and other professionals to help them.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes. You know, there's so much more that we could talk about. One I wanted to touch on before we close off, because time's getting on here. But even young adults are – you know, their brains are still developing. I taught for many years at a university campus, and at our university, I was appalled that they allow marketers to come in, particularly companies that are pushing credit cards...

**Kanner:** Mm-hmm...

**Dr. Dave:** ...and cell phones. And they come in and they're signing up kids right and left. And I read in – maybe it was in your paper, or maybe it was in the newspaper – the average undergraduate right now is carrying a debt of over \$2,000 a month on credit cards. So young people start off in life today immensely in debt as a result of – at least, I think in large part – of this marketing.

**Kanner:** Right. And just to add to that, the armed forces have been hiring child marketers and marketers who aim at young adults to basically sell the military on campus. So that's another big problem...

**Dr. Dave:** Wow.

**Kanner:** (inaudible) that's going on. Right now, the other people, of course, who like to market to college students are the beer and alcohol companies...

**Dr. Dave:** Right.

**Kanner:** ...because they need to get people young or they'll go bankrupt if they don't replace all the people who are dying with new alcoholics – then they can't survive. So it's imperative that they reach high school and college students. So I want to repeat that: If they don't reach these youngsters, they can't survive economically, because people who become alcoholic – it's also true of tobacco – most of the people who become addicted to it, become addicted young. And a huge amount of the profit, or the income that comes from alcohol and from tobacco, is from repeat users; in other words, those who are addicted. So without the young people coming aboard, these companies couldn't survive. So you're right, the college has become another market, and it's happening all over the campus – the bookstores, every place you go – the college students are also being marketed to.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah. That's true. And even the buildings. The buildings are up, the names are up for sale...(laughs)

**Kanner:** Yeah. The stadiums...(inaudible)

**Dr. Dave:** The stadiums...the cultural art centers...

**Kanner:** Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, to wrap things up here, is there any sort of last summation or thought that you'd like to leave our listeners with?

**Kanner:** Yeah, I'd like to talk a little bit... In my group, people, my group's called the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, just to mention that. It's [www.commercialfreechildhood.org](http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org). And David, just like you, I've lived long enough to see some things happen that seemed utterly unthinkable when I was young: the collapse of the Soviet Union; the fact that a state like Massachusetts would legalize gay marriage. Those things, when we were young, just seemed impossible. People often say to me, "How can you possibly expect the system to change, for marketing to children to stop?" And that's, of course, what they would like us to think and feel. And I'm actually optimistic that in time, if we keep up our protests and our actions, that we can change this whole system around. I think we very much need to do so, but you never know what's going to work and when it's going to work, and how it's going to play out. So you just have to keep plugging away and doing your best, and then letting go, as it were. And I think it's a very worthwhile activity and fight.

**Dr. Dave:** Well, I totally agree with you, and Dr. Allen Kanner, thanks so much for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Kanner:** Thank you. It's great being here.