Brands of all types (e.g., product brands, service brands, corporate brands, celebrity brands, place brands, and non-profit brands) are integral to the lives of consumers and the (conscious and unconscious) goals they seek. Two critical dimensions that characterize customers’ relationship with a brand are brand relationship strength and valence. To illustrate, some brand relationships are characterized by strong and positive brand-self connections. Positive brand-self connections can result in strong brand attachment and impact brand loyalty and brand advocacy behaviors. Negative brand relationships are characterized by strong brand-self connections that can generate aversion to a brand in response to what it represents or what it has done. Such brands are seen as distant from or antithetical to the self and one’s self-view. In still other cases, consumers can exhibit a mixed brand relationship characterized by strong positive and strong negative emotions (brand ambivalence). Once developed, the relationship can also change over time in strength and valence (e.g., strong brand relationships may become weak; positive relationships may become negative, etc.).

A critical and under-researched issue in the area of consumer-brand relationships concerns the role of self-relevant emotions. Brand relationships are influenced by self-relevant emotions that contribute to or undermine consumer happiness. Such emotions include positive emotions like gratitude, excitement, joy, nostalgia, pride, relief, inspiration, trustworthiness, respect, love, endearment. These contrast with negative emotions like fear, anxiety, embarrassment, guilt, shame, disgust, regret, anger. Self-relevant emotions can also include mixed emotions such as guilt and pleasure; regret and relief. These can play a critical role in shaping and changing customers’ brand relationships. The formation and change of such relationships is emotionally evocative.

The objective of this special issue is to bring together current, high quality research that informs, excites, and expands on our understanding of brand relationships, and brand relationship changes as it pertains to consumers’ emotions and/or sense of self. We seek both conceptual and empirical papers that broaden and deepen our understanding of these issues.

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The issue is agnostic as to research method; any research method is acceptable, and multiple research methods are encouraged. Papers must focus on brands (vs. products). Manuscripts will be evaluated on the basis of their novelty, rigor, and fit with the objectives of the issue. Researchers who wish to serve as reviewers of special issue papers should contact the special issue editors.