

# Chapter

# 2

## Your Goals and Your Values

Refer back to Activity 1.1 and Activity 1.2. Did the things you picked as important in life and the goals you identified reflect your “values”? Can you tell?

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**Values are like the engine in a car. A car can look great on the outside — or it can look less than great. Appearances tell you very little about the car. How it runs, how it performs, how far it goes, and where it ends up all depend significantly on the engine.**

**The same is true of people.**

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What are values anyway? Values are those things that make up your character. They represent what you think is important in life. They show up in your decisions, actions, and judgments.

How we look on the outside tells very little. It's what's on the inside that will make most of the difference. And values are a big part of what's inside.

There are many things that can influence your values. Your parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, and friends are particularly strong influences. Television, movies, videos, and music certainly play a role, too. Advertising can also do a great deal to influence, or try to influence, what you think is important and what you value.

Your values will also govern many of your financial decisions. What material things are important to you? How much money will you need? What will you do to get it? What trade-offs will you make? What will you do with your

money? And so on. There is no denying that decisions related to money are important — they affect each of our lives and those around us. And your values affect those decisions.

Let's try to explore the things in life that you value — and the things that have influenced your values.



## A Value-able Top Ten

It is time for brutal honesty. Below are a number of things you may think are important in life. They may be things in life you want for yourself, what you try to be or hope for, or things you respect in others. There are probably other things that are important to you that aren't included. Please add them to the list. Then select the "top ten," the things you value most, and rank them one to ten.

### WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU

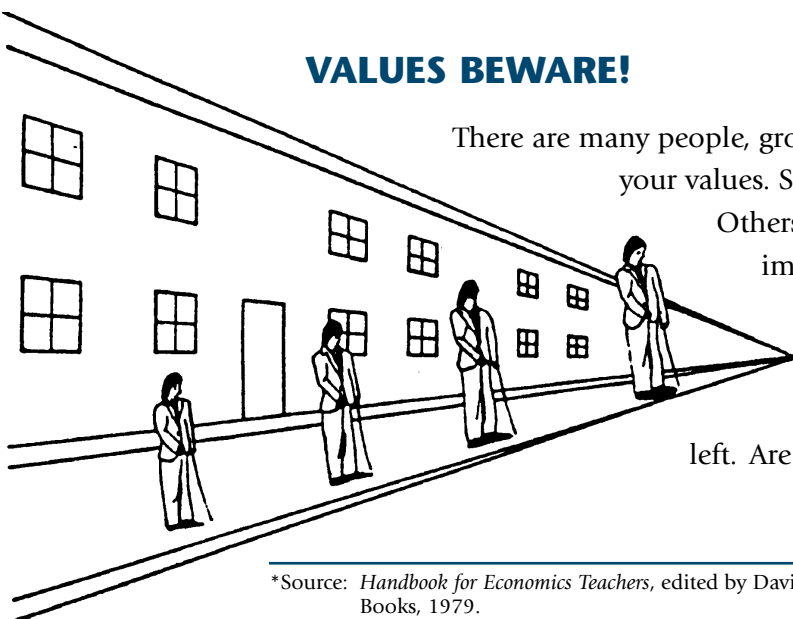
Happiness	Recreation and travel	Maturity	Good health
Work	Status	Education	Freedom
Family	Tolerance	Love	Compassion
Sympathy	Loyalty	Fitness	Honesty
Reliability	Fun	Wealth	Acceptance
Patriotism	Responsibility	Respect	Sense of humour
Security	Beauty	Honour	Safety
Faith	Commitment and dedication	Religion	Being in style
Acquiring abilities/skills	Independence	Excitement	Influence
Friendship	Risk	Helping others	Community involvement
			Others:

### VALUES BEWARE!

There are many people, groups, and things that can influence your values. Some may *try* to influence them.

Others may do so *without* even trying. It is important to be cautious about those who are out to influence what you do and the decisions you make.

Take a look at the visual\* to the left. Are all of the figures the same size?



\*Source: *Handbook for Economics Teachers*, edited by David J. Whitehead. London: Heineman Educational Books, 1979.



To most people, the figures will appear to be of different sizes. Put a ruler alongside each one. They are, in fact, the same size. But the way they have been drawn makes them appear to be different than they really are.

Visual illusions such as this can be fun. They also make a point. We can be fooled. We can be influenced. We can be made to see things differently than they really are. Take a look at the visual on the left.\* Do you see a picture of an old woman or a young woman?

Did you see both? Both are there. The point is that different people can see things differently. It's not necessarily such that one is wrong and the other is right. Both may be right. So whenever you think something is true, consider whether or not there might be other ways of looking at it. Is there another point of view? A better point of view? A view that will strengthen what you believe?

## ACTIVITY 2.2

### Course Source

In Activity 2.1, you identified the things you feel you value most in life. But where did those values come from? What influenced your values in the past? What influences your values today? Possible influences are listed below. From these, or others you can think of, identify the top seven factors that you believe have contributed the most to determining what you value most. Refer back to your top ten values list and try to figure out where those values came from. Are you aware of what has influenced you in the past and what influences you today? Or did your values sort of sneak up on you?

#### POSSIBLE INFLUENCES

Your parents	Other people	Books	Camp experiences
Other relatives	Television	Magazines	Volunteer experiences
Your childhood experiences	Entertainment personalities	Travel experiences	Work experiences
Your childhood friends	Sport personalities	Specific events	Sickness or injury
Your current friends	Radio	Community activity	Others:
Your teachers	Music		

\*Source: *Handbook for Economics Teachers*, edited by David J. Whitehead. London: Heineman Educational Books, 1979.



## Psst — Over Here

Think about the last time that somebody tried to influence a decision that you made. How long ago was it? Why were they trying to influence your decision? How frequently does this tend to happen?

Others may see things differently than you do and may try to bring you around to their way of thinking. And, as you know, what is right for them, may not necessarily be right for you.

Consider some instances where people's views differ. What is "right" and "wrong" is often somewhat unclear.



## "Perspecting"

Identify two different perspectives, each of which might be true to some degree, that might be held on each of the following:

- ▶ Nuclear testing
- ▶ University education
- ▶ Space research and exploration program
- ▶ Birth control
- ▶ God
- ▶ Computers in education

## PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure refers to how others your own age can influence your thinking — on purpose or not. Peer pressure is one of the strongest influences on young people. Friends, classmates, teammates, and workmates are usually very important to you. You may value them and what they think and do.

At the same time, they are in the same situation as you are — trying to figure out their lives, trying things, thinking about things, and figuring out what they value and what's important to them.

Many of the decisions that you make in your youth will be influenced by your peers. Situations can arise that involve making decisions related to alcohol, smoking, drugs, clothing fads and styles, concerts, schools, careers, jobs, and so on. Many of these are difficult decisions, and peers can apply a great deal of pressure — either directly on you or by the decisions they have made and what they are doing. You will face times and decisions when your values are really put to the test.



In a group situation, discuss the following:

- ▶ Where does peer pressure push the hardest (for example, when deciding whether or not to smoke, to dress a certain way, to listen to certain music, to drink, to associate with certain people, to want certain possessions, and so on)?
- ▶ What are the best ways to deal with peer pressure when you disagree with the direction toward which it is pushing you?

As far as money matters go, your peers again may seek to influence you — how much you spend, what you buy, how much you borrow, what styles you follow. Once again, it is important to make the decisions you believe are best for you, the ones that fit your values, priorities, and goals.

## KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES



### N V N U

Are you envious? Does envy play much of a role in terms of your goals, decisions, and actions? On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the influence of envy on your economic decisions.

Do you feel envy plays much of a role in your life at this time? Do you feel envious of anyone? Is there something that you currently want that stems from envy? Have you made a recent decision or purchase that stems from envy?

You may not even know anyone by the name of Jones. For you, it may be the Howards, the Garneaus, the Villachis, or others. The “Joneses” is simply a reference to those around us with whom we may struggle to keep up. We may want what they have, or try to live how they live. For youth, the “Joneses” can be friends who wear certain shoes or jackets, go to certain concerts, wear certain clothes, drive certain cars, have a new possession (such as an MP3 player, or computer, or computer software), take vacations, and so on.

Basically, it comes down to envy and the role it plays in your values, decisions, actions, and goals.

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There may be many reasons why another person was able to get what he/she did — everything from generous parents, to an inheritance, to a good job, to trading off other things, to effective saving, to hard work, to a large debt. You will have to judge how much you will make your decisions on the basis of trying to keep up with, or get ahead of, others.

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## What's Cool?

Look around at those in your peer group. What things have people been buying that you think are decisions made by them to “keep up” with what others are doing or to be “in” or “cool”?

### ADVERTISING

Advertising is the way producers provide information to consumers about a product or service and how they encourage consumers to purchase it. It is their objective to convince you, as a consumer, to purchase their product. At the same time, advertisers are governed by rules and regulations (such as those provided under the Competition Act, the Food and Drugs Act, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, and other federal and provincial laws) that set standards and guidelines for advertisers. For example, it is illegal for advertisers to provide untrue or deceptive information. They cannot make false claims about their product. They cannot make untrue statements about their competitor's product.

Therefore, within certain guidelines, the advertiser's aim is to influence you and to get you to buy a particular product or service. This is not as deceptive an act as it may sound. As you know, there are many good products and services available. If you don't know about them, you can't make effective decisions about which ones, if any, you want to purchase and use. Furthermore, producers have the right to make accurate claims about how good their product is. If the product is good, they should certainly be able to let you know about it.

Advertising performs a number of positive functions:



It is a source of information regarding new products, existing products, and improvements or changes to products.



It encourages competition, which can lead to product improvements, lower prices, specials, improvements in supply and availability, and more.



As you are probably well aware, advertising pays for media presentations. Advertising sponsors TV and radio shows, magazines and newspapers, concerts, and so forth.

Advertisers sponsor these activities according to how many of their potential customers they believe will watch the show, listen to the show, read the magazine or paper, or come to the concert. Through sponsorship, some of these activities, such as TV and radio programs, are provided free to us (even though we do end up paying for the advertising in the prices we pay for what we buy). Some (such as a newspaper) are provided to us at much lower cost than would otherwise be the case, and some (such as a concert) might not have come to town without the sponsor.



Advertising enables consumers to compare the different products and services that are available.

But just as advertisers have their objectives, priorities, beliefs, and methods, so do consumers. The consumer is out to make the best, most effective “buy” that is possible.

How can advertising have a powerful influence on your buying decisions? Advertising may lead you into impulse buying (buying on the spot without much thought) or fad buying. It may lead you to buy something you really don’t want, or don’t need, or shouldn’t buy at this time. But who’s fault is that — the advertiser’s or yours? There is a saying — *caveat emptor* — which means “let the buyer beware.” You are responsible for your own decisions. If you make a bad buy (one that is not in your best interest), then, unless an ad has been misleading or illegal, you have only yourself to blame. Therefore, when making your buying decisions it is important for you to be aware of some of the ways in which advertisers may try to influence you to buy their product.

Some of the techniques that advertisers may use to influence you are listed on the next page. The advertiser’s job is to put the product forward in the best light possible. Your job, as a wise consumer, is to use your head and make the decisions that you think will be best for you.

There is one further point to mention in this section. As a consumer, you do have certain “rights.” We are not going to go into them all here, but you should investigate and know what your rights are. For example, you have the right to receive accurate information through advertising, not misleading or incorrect information.

You may find that, on occasion, your rights have been abused. Or you may have a complaint about a good or service you purchased. If so, identify who you can speak with and voice your complaints. For those times (which we hope will be few) when you have legitimate complaints, you need to learn the “art of effective complaining.” Most producers will welcome the chance to



## Advertising and You

Review each of the advertising techniques described below. See if you can think of one or more product or service ads that you have seen recently that use the following techniques. Rank these techniques from 1 to 10 in terms of which is the most effective at influencing your opinion of a product or service. Let “1” represent the most effective and “10” the least.

- ▶ **REPETITION** You have heard it said that “If you tell people the same thing often enough, they will come to believe it.” Some advertisers will use this method, repeating their message over and over again.  
*[Eat at Joe’s! ..... Eat at Joe’s! ..... Eat at Joe’s! ..... Eat at Joe’s! .....]*
- ▶ **CONFORMITY** This approach aims to have you “get on board,” “be in,” “get with it.”  
*[Join “the Pepsi generation.”]*
- ▶ **IMITATION** This is the effort by an advertiser to influence a consumer by having a celebrity associated with the good or service. The advertiser hopes that those who like and respect the celebrity will imitate the behaviour by using the product.  
*[“Last year I won the Indy 500...but I know I would never have won without....”]*
- ▶ **EMOTIONAL APPEAL** This is where the advertiser seeks to draw upon one or more of the consumer’s emotions to influence the decision. *[“That Long Distance Feeling.”]*
- ▶ **GOOD WILL** Providing something for free – a free sample, a free issue, and so on. However, always remember that there is no such thing as a free lunch – someone always pays. It’s a question of who pays and why.  
*[“Four free CDs! Just sign up to buy one CD a month and you’ll get four free CDs!”]*
- ▶ **SCARE TECHNIQUES** Well, maybe not exactly scare techniques, but who wants to face the consequences of going around with bad breath, blotchy skin, or underarm odor, especially when the ads portray such awful consequences.  
*[“Nick and Lotta were about to kiss when, all of a sudden, Lotta noticed Nick’s teeth. If only Nick had used...”]*
- ▶ **SNOB APPEAL** These ads are designed to appeal to those who want to be seen as in the lead, on the move, up and comers, those who have made it and want others to know about it. These ads emphasize that if you have the product you are definitely “in” or among the “elite” or “successful.”  
*[“If you need to know the price, you’re not interested.”]*
- ▶ **ECONOMIC APPEAL** This type of ad presents the “great deal” – no money down, no interest payments, and so on. Be on your toes and watch for those that are genuine deals and those that have catches to them such as factoring all of the delayed interest payments into the price.  
*[“No payments until 2010! That’s right, it can be yours and you don’t pay until 2010!”]*
- ▶ **COMFORT AND ENJOYMENT** Some advertisers may attempt to present their product in relation to something that, although enjoyable, is largely unrelated to the product. For example, have you ever sat through a commercial wondering what on earth was being advertised – only to be surprised at the end?
- ▶ **HUMOUR** One method to attempt to influence your purchase is to present the product or service in a humorous way and hope that your laughter will carry over all the way to your buying decisions.



## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Clip your favourite, and least favourite, ad from a newspaper or magazine. Identify why you like or dislike the ad and share your opinions with others.

turn an unhappy customer into a happy one. After all, if you leave unhappy, you'll probably never return. They lose your future business. Give them a chance to fix any mistakes or problems. Discuss, in a group, the art of effective complaining. Who has had a reason to complain? What did they do about the problem? Was that the right thing to do? What else could they have done? What was the desired result? What was the actual result?