

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INFOMERCIALS:

PERSUASION AND MANUFACTURED URGENCY

DISCUSSION GUIDE



BEFORE YOU DISCUSS

Watch an infomercial (or a compilation) with a curious mind. Notice the patterns and the techniques. There's no need to buy anything—just observe.



Goal:
Understand how the pitch works, not whether the product does.

KEY DISCUSSION THEMES

1 THE PROBLEM IS THE HOOK



How is the problem introduced?
Does it feel bigger or more dramatic than everyday life?
Why might that be effective?

2 THE PROMISE IS THE HOPE



What promise does the product make?
What will life look like if you have it?
What emotions are being activated?

3 THE PROOF BUILDS TRUST



What kinds of proof are used (testimonials, demonstrations, experts, data)?
How might each appeal to us?

4 THE URGENCY DRIVES ACTION



What creates a sense of urgency?
How does that affect your ability to think clearly and decide?

5 THE PRICE THEATER EASES RESISTANCE



What pricing tactics are used?
How do discounts, bonuses, and "only today" offers influence your decision?



PERSONAL REFLECTION

- When do I notice myself most vulnerable to persuasive messages?
- What needs or desires does the pitch appeal to in me?
- How can I honor my goals and values in the face of urgency and pressure?



GROUP ACTIVITIES



DETECT THE TECHNIQUES

As a group, list every persuasive technique you can find in the infomercial.



SEPARATE FACT FROM PITCH

What statements are verifiable facts?
What are opinions or claims?



REWRITE THE PITCH

Rewrite the main pitch in one honest, balanced paragraph without hype.



ROLE PLAY

Split into three roles:

- The Pitch Team (create the infomercial)
- The Skeptic (asks hard questions)
- The Buyer (decides what to do)

Reflect on how each role felt and what you learned.



TAKEAWAYS

- Infomercials use proven psychological principles to persuade.
- Emotions are engaged first; logic often comes later.
- Urgency is a tool, not a truth.
- The goal is not to eliminate desire, but to create space for wise choices.
- You have the power to pause, question, and choose intentionally.



SMART VIEWER CHECKLIST

- ☒ What problem is being highlighted?
- ☐ What promise is being made?
- ☒ What proof is being offered?
- ☒ What urgency tactics are used?
- ☐ What is the real price (in money, time, or attention)?
- ☐ Does this align with my goals and values?



DR. MICHAEL ZAKALIK, PSY.D.
Psychologist for Parenting | Z Psychology



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