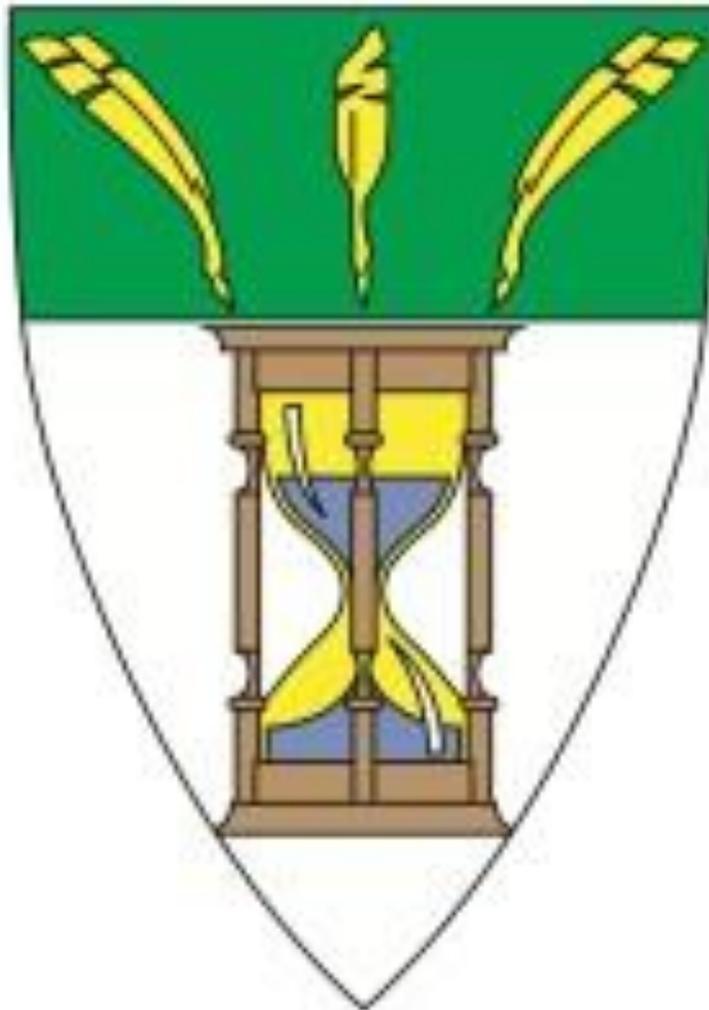


# Mémoire collectif 2021/2022



**Écrit par: SCHILDBACH Jesse, RADULOVIC Noah & CARVALHO GOMES Lara**

**Classes : 3CD, 3CG & 3CC**

**Directrice de mémoire : KREMER Paule**

# PSYCHOLOGY OF MANIPULATION

How many mind games  
have been played on you  
today?

# **Mémoire collectif 2021/2022**

Written by:

SCHILDBACH Jesse (3CD), RODULOVIC Noah (3CG) & CARVALHO  
GOMES Lara (3CC)

Directrice de mémoire :

KREMER Paule

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## 1. Introduction

Manipulation is something everyone deals with in their everyday life, yet it is still a rarely discussed topic, partly because most individuals do not understand its meaning. People are constantly manipulated in various ways. Be it through advertisements, social media or even in the medical field. So, how, and why do we get manipulated and what does it even mean? Since these were questions, we wondered about as a , we decided to base this written work “mémoire collectif” on the psychology of manipulation. The fact that the three of us are going into completely different study directions, made it even more interesting. Even if it does not seem like it, manipulation is a topic that has something in it for the three of us, from marketing to education and medicine.

As mentioned, we will handle several different aspects of manipulation. In the end, thanks to the information we have gathered, we will try our best to answer to our question: **“How many mind games have been played on you today?”**. Thanks to our research, after having read our work, you will understand the meaning of manipulation as well as its effects. Additionally, we included some manipulative techniques as well as how you can protect yourself from being manipulated.

## 2. Definition

### 2.1. Main definition

***“To control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means especially to one's own advantage”***

***Definition by: Merriam-Webster***

Before getting into too much detail, you should be aware of the essentials. So, it is best if we start by explaining what manipulation stands for.

In general, there are a couple of different types of manipulation, however we will focus on the psychological as well as the medical kinds. Psychological manipulation is considered as a type of social influence. This means that the manipulator has an impact on people's behavior and opinion. In other words, he takes advantage of people by taking control over their mind, in order to achieve his personal objectives and interests. Emotional manipulation, on the other hand, is when emotional connections are used. In this case, the manipulator plays upon someone by using its weaknesses and insecurities such as fears against them. In medicine, manipulation has a different definition, which will be explained in the upcoming chapter.

Here is something important you should know: most people, and I bet you are one of them, tend to confound manipulation with persuasion. As already mentioned, manipulation is when you control someone for your own benefit. In this case, you should consider yourself selfish. However, to persuade someone is when you cause them to do something (or in some cases to believe in something) that brings a positive outcome to them and not to you. Considering everything, we could conclude that the bad guy manipulates others and the good one, persuades them.

### 3. Manipulation in everyday life

#### 3.1. Through social media

Firstly, what is advertising?

Advertising is defined by the act of promoting a service or a product using various means such as notices, sponsoring or announcements by showing them to the public.

#### **What does sponsoring mean?**

Sponsorship is the set of support actions lugged out by a company for a sponsored organisation. Sponsorship consists of providing assistance to a person or organisation, whether in financial or in material form in exchange for publicity that promotes the company's image.

#### **What is a sponsored post?**

A sponsored post on the social media platforms is a paid post which's goal is to reach a larger audience. Usually there are two ways of sponsoring on social medias. One of them is the brand which creates their own advertisement and pays the social media platform to access to a custom audience as well as to get it in front of the users.

#### **What is an influencer?**

On the other side we have a brand which will sponsor a user who will have to promote their product or service in some way. Those type of users are called influencers. Mostly, Influencers create a post or a video where they explain the utility of the product while showing how to use this product. Those type of users are called Influencers.

Back then, influencers always had to hashtag #sponsorship or #add in their posts in order to get paid for their advertisements. However, these hashtags made the post loose its credibility as well as getting an inauthentic look whichever made the brands uncomfortable.

Those hashtags can also have an impact on the influencer itself which can ruin the credibility of the person. One of the worst consequences would be the destruction of the influencer's whole community, which in other words, is the loss of the fruit of his hard work for so many years.

#### **What are Cookies?**

Invented in 1994, a cookie is defined as a small info text which gets sent by an HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) server to a so-called HTTP client. The next interaction with the servers that share the same domain name returns this text.

In other words, it allows websites to track users as they move from one page to another on the site, even when they return a few days later. The cookies stored during a certain amount (which depends on how the user managed his settings in the browser) of time on the visitor's terminal which usually is the browser's cache or a simple non-executable Text file (.txt).

Cookies are mostly used to identify the session of an Internet user connected to his computer account, whichever generally are used to link any status information, such as display preferences or the contents of a shopping cart, recently downloaded files/games as well as the search history.

Cookies have always been a more or less controversial subject due to their permission to track users while visiting all possible websites as long as these sites all get visited on the same web-tracking provider (browser) whether they are related or not.

### **What is their role on social media?**

As previously explained, a cookie is a tracking concept on the internet used to track all sort of possible information of individual users on the web. However, on social media the cookies are generally set through widgets, plugins or reaction buttons (such as like, share, save, repost, etc.). Their job remains similar than on the web which is to track the users. Although, the social media cookies will focus on other variables such as the users' profile on the platform, its feed & preferences (liked posts, followed profiles, activity history, etc.) as well as the purchase & product search history on those social media platforms. All this data will in part help the third-party platform to create a custom online profile of each user in order to be able to provide each of them with custom content that may interest them. Additionally, the data will also be used by the various sites to which these cookies belong in order to serve advertisements only to users who fit the ideal profile and who might be interested in the content of the ad.

Similarly, cookies help influencers and other types of content creators attract new users. For example, an influencer who often posts about beauty and makeup will often fall into the users' suggestions or on their "for you" page.

Thus, the popularity and liking of the content creator will also play a role as well as which user group likes him/her. If, for example, a content creator of a certain game is not only appreciated by the community of the game in question, but also by a part of the users of another game community, the content creator will be suggested to users of both communities.

## 4. Manipulative marketing

### 4.1. Marketing Mix

As marketing mix mainly includes four factors, all of which serve to optimise the marketing system of a company. These four factors are decided to make the product or the company in general as attractive as possible:

1. Product
2. Price
3. Place
4. Promotion

#### The Product:

As the name already suggests, the product, also called product policy, has the task to find and develop the best possible product for the customer. To be able to implement this, the analysis of the target group plays a decisive role. Before you launch a product or service on the market, you need to know who is actually going to buy it. The entire marketing and advertising strategy is then based on the target group. So, you look very closely at where and when the target group hangs out somewhere, and whether they prefer, for example, social media advertising, TV and radio advertising or advertising in print media such as the daily newspaper or a magazine.

However, let's come back to the product policy. In general, it is about all the activities carried out by companies, which speak about the selection, the further development and, in the end, the marketing of the product. As with all components of the marketing mix self-questioning is essential.

Examples:

- Which brand should release the product (when a group owns more than a brand)?
- Should there be different variants of the product

You basically have more complex questions, for example concerning the marketing strategy around the product, but on the other hand also simple questions, like the location where the product should be sold or the price of it.

#### The Price:

It is obvious that the price policy concerns all the activities from a brand around the pricing. In Marketing, the Price is considered as the amount the customer has to pay to receive the product or the service. Of course, you try to make the price look as attractive as possible. That is the reason why we always see the X,99 prices, because it naturally looks like the price is lower. This is a well-known tool in the psychology, because it is based on a simulacrum<sup>1</sup> which is not real. The main target of the price policy is to create the prices on an attractive level, but at the same time, brings high sales to the company. The balance between attractiveness, so that the consumer is also willing to buy the product, and a high enough turnover for the company is therefore crucial.



Figure 1: A classic template of a price tag (<https://www.papengewerbung.de/>)

**The Place:**

The place point is also called distribution policy. This part of the Marketing Mix contains all activities of a company that are related to the distribution of a product. However, it can of course concern services that are offered to the customer. In general, we are talking about the external policy of a company. The distribution policy is built in mainly two structures. The first is the direct sale and distribution from the company to the customer, the second structure is a distribution with intermediaries. This structure is often found, for example, in furniture stores, where companies have their products displayed to sell through the furniture store.

**Marketing mix- 4P's**



Figure 2: The 4Ps in the Marketing Mix explained with examples (<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/626422629404189215/>)

**The Promotion:**

The promotion point is also called communications policy. The aim is to create the best possible exchange between the company and the end customer. Some communication tools are used for this purpose. The probably most obvious tool is the basic advertisement. This is a very good way to get the needed information across. The advantage is that only the most necessary information is passed on, so the

consumer is not overloaded. In addition, there is the so-called "sales promotion". In principle, this comprises activities that are intended to provide special stimuli for the potential buyer so that he or she buys the product. A good example of this is a store's sale activities. This is also referred to as a psychological effect. Subconsciously, people believe that they are receiving a kind of gift from the store, and they have the feeling that they must give something back in return, i.e., in the form of a purchase. There are also other sales tricks that are based on exactly this effect, such as, for example, that when it comes to food, you can try things out before you buy them. Here, too, we have the feeling that we have received something special out of kindness, and also have to give something back. Another tool used in the communications policy are the Public Relations. Public relations involve the use of external sources, such as journalists or logistics company representatives, who act as a link between the seller and the customer. In addition to that, we still have the "direct marketing", which basically are all the activities addressing directly the customer. Examples for this tool are personal letters or E-Mail Newsletters. Finally, we have the personal sale, this one is nowadays not so much used. We speak of sales which take place at company stands, such as trade fairs where you talk directly to the customer.

### 4.2. Advertising psychology

Advertising psychology is a part of the whole psychology, but it specialises only in advertising, that is, how to manipulate people with advertising. To do this, there are various tricks that are used, as well as some advertising methods. Many companies hire their own psychologists, which are used to conduct market research and to study, evaluate and use various factors. These include, for example, the handling of money, the personalised perception of products, as well as the images of companies and, of course, the effect of advertising on potential customers.

Psychologists use many advertising techniques. One of them is the AIDA method. This word is an abbreviation and is a mix between attention, interest, the desire, and the final action. It is a quite simple model with just four successive phases. In the end, the customer is supposed to buy the product or pay something for a service.

The first step is, of course, to attract the attention of a customer, for example, through various advertisements, for example, on YouTube or in newspapers. But this can also happen in the form of word of mouth, that is, that people simply talk about it among themselves. If the attention is then there, an interest should also arise, i.e., an interest directed towards the product. Then a desire should arise to want to buy the product. This desire is often created by manipulation. Emotions play a particularly important role in manipulation in marketing and advertising. Because as we have already seen, we humans are much easier to steer to one side with corresponding emotions. If then the desire is finally there, the product is bought, and the goal is reached. This method is already relatively old, because it was already used, so the complete advertising industry was still in the starting blocks. As this industry has grown over time and become more and more complex, there are now new methods that function in the same way according to the step model. So, in principle they are still the same as the standard method, but rather adapted to the times.



Figure 4: Visualisation of the AIDA Method (<https://bsscommerce.com/>)

One of the mentioned techniques is the PPPP method. This method is based on the four stages. The first step is the picture, then the promise, then the proof and the push. The first point is also about attention. However, rather more specific, as images say much more than any texts. This means that images are a good manipulation tool. Then it is also about interest again, as a promise is made. This is often done by promising something to a potential customer about what the product has or what feature is present. There we are again with the topic manipulation and psychology, since it is in the consequence almost always in such a way that curiosity arises with the spectator since it wants to know absolutely whether this promise actually corresponds to the truth or not. Then the person with the curiosity looks at a video of the product, for example. So, it's all about proof, and if this can be provided, the product is bought in the norm. All these four stages are a part of manipulation. In everyday life we do not notice this, or at least we do not perceive it directly. But everything, every advertisement we see, has been set up with such a scheme and acts according to it. Since the PPPP method is more targeted to a category, it cannot be applied universally. Where you often encounter this method is in TV sales programs.

These were the techniques of advertising; however, these still include some advertising methods, and methods of attracting attention with advertising.

## 5. What impact does it have on people?

### 5.1. Effects of emotional manipulation

Emotional manipulation is based on a completely different strategy than commercial manipulation in business and also pursues different goals. It is not a question of manipulation techniques that sometimes play on people's fear and conscience, but this type is much more about gaining power and control over the other person. This kind of manipulation can often be found in unhealthy relationships. Actually, according to scientists, emotional manipulation, as we are dealing with it here, should no longer be included in the normal manipulation branch, since it is basically only about negative effects, more precisely about things like passive aggression, emotional bullying and blaming.

Even if the effects and the motives are very negative, this kind of manipulation is one of the most successful there is, because everything that is emotional in people is extremely vulnerable and manipulable.

#### Gaslighting:

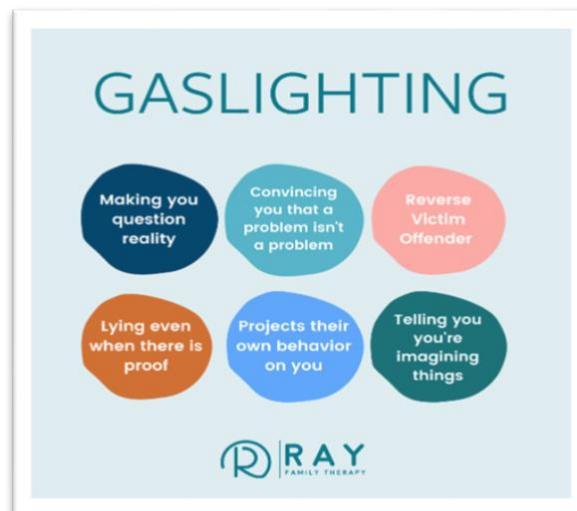


Figure 5: Examples of Gaslighting (<https://www.rayfamilytherapy.com/blog/gaslighting>)

Gaslighting is a kind of subcategory of emotional manipulation. In contrast to this, gaslighting goes a little further and actually already goes in the direction of social humiliation and emotional abuse. Gaslighting does not involve subconscious manipulation in the form of body language, but rather conscious emotional manipulation, which usually pursues perfidious goals. Examples of gaslighting are intimidation, deliberate lies, contradictions or even accusations that are presented to you. It works particularly well when there is already a good relationship of trust between the people involved.

A good example of people who use gaslighting are stalkers who practice many of the theoretical methods. Since this kind of manipulation is about the emotions and partly also about the psychological well-being, it can of course also have consequences in the aftermath. Victims who have been gaslighting for a long period of time sometimes still suffer from perceptual disorders later on, in that they think too much about many things and can get well into it.

## 6. Manipulative techniques

### 6.1. Basic techniques that are used to manipulate

#### General Manipulation in the social sphere:

We are very often manipulated, even if we do not suspect it now, for example in interpersonal conversations with an acquaintance, and not even on purpose. Often, manipulation happens subconsciously to the other person or even to oneself. By nature, we want to achieve our goals, whether long-term or short-term, and this is also the case in normal conversations. With facial expressions, gestures or changes in voice pitch, this often happens in the field of communication. However, we also play with emotions. Bad conscience is often tried to trigger to bring the opposite to certain things, because in any way, manipulation applies: **Emotions and feelings are the strongest weapon**. Also, because of playing with other people's emotions in a way, the word "manipulation" is often seen as very critical. So, manipulation has a very negative reputation.

#### What are manipulation techniques?

As the name suggests, these techniques, are used to manipulate. The manipulation itself is defined as the "covert influence". Manipulation techniques are used to persuade people to do something. In principle, there are six manipulation techniques that are very well known and respected. Therefore, they are also constantly used in the advertising industry because their success. The first is the method through repetition.

#### Repetition method:

This method is often used in the advertising industry, but it is considered as very intrusive, because it involves the constant repetition of certain things, such as an advertising clip. It is scientifically proven that if we see or hear something more often, it will be better memorised in our brain. So, the advertisers place an advertisement (for example, in front of videos on YouTube) very often, so that the viewer builds an authentic connection with it and remembers it. So, for example, if you see an ad about a food platform very often, and at some point, you want to order food, you will most likely end up on that platform. However, this technique is also useful in general, because even with tasks like learning, it helps if you repeat subjects often, because then you remember them better.

#### Playing with the fear:

As we have said before, in the manipulation field much is based on emotions, and this includes fear. Under state of fear, you can control people perfectly, because in this case we humans no longer think rationally and with logic but are driven by our emotions.

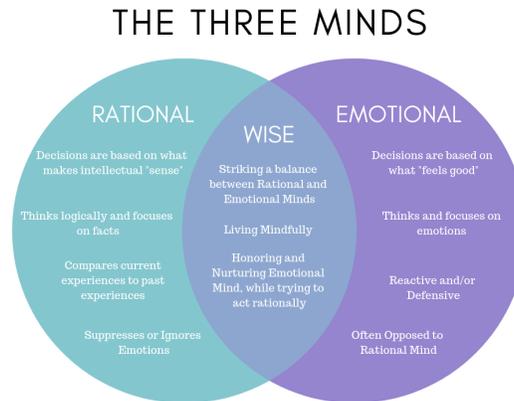


Figure 6: An explanation of our minds (<https://www.calmsage.com/>)

### Rational and emotional thinking:

There are basically two ways of thinking; the rational way and the emotional way. There are even separate areas in the brain for the different ways of thinking. Let's start with rational thinking. Rational is the term used to describe reason. To make a decision, for example, one looks at what the advantages and disadvantages of the decision would be. A person who thinks rationally usually acts logically, analytically, and according to a plan. You have the ability to keep your emotions under control and not let them have a say in the decision-making process. The other side of thinking is the emotional kind. This is exactly the opposite of the ratio. When we are controlled by our emotions, we stop thinking with logic and reason. If you are more inclined to be driven by emotions, you are also an easier target for advertising because your emotions make you easier to manipulate. Emotional thinking is also called the cognitive<sup>1</sup> process. Often, under such a mindset, we have a disturbed perception, which also depends on our own mood and the self-confidence that we have now. For example, we take words from others more negatively, or rather directed against us, if we are emotionally controlled, although this does not have to be the truth. The problem here is that false opinions can arise, and misunderstandings are often the case. In general, it can be said that emotional thinking is very complex and is a personal thing.

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However, let's come back to the manipulation techniques. When it comes to donations, for example, people often play on fear. According to the principle if not that, then... The time pressure and the apparently present danger are also used a lot. An example for the time pressure is that it can be too late every second and one must make urgently something, e.g., donate a certain amount.

### Manipulation of thinking:

Human thought takes place for the most part subconscious. This means that we make decisions that can be decisive, but we are not directly aware of it. And it is precisely at this point that manipulation can be applied. For example, the so-called "exaggeration form" can be used, i.e., you do not say something normally, but

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<sup>1</sup> Cognitive: concerning perception, thinking, cognition



you add words like super or extra in front of it, in order to attract more attention and to appear more convincing. Another well-known technique also goes into the realm of make-believe. It is used for intellectual presentations or discussions. However, this technique is usually not used consciously, but simply happens. For example, you are presented with a very complex presentation, and even if you don't understand anything, you still think you are at an extremely high level. This is a very common psychological effect. It is sometimes described as a slight, but at the same time classic form of overestimation of one's own abilities, because one's thinking is changed by

the complexity. This lack of understanding of the subject can nevertheless also be used specifically for manipulation. Because in psychology it is generally the case that people are much more susceptible to manipulation if they are psychologically unstable for a short time, for example in the case of fear or even overestimation of one's own capabilities, and the marketing industry starts precisely there. Another example of such instability is insecurity. This can be generated, among other things, with so-called unfair "techniques of dialectics".

Unfair dialectics:

Unfair dialectic is a very personal area, more precisely, it revolves around the personal criticism of external culture, meaning other people are involved. On the one hand, it is about the personal attack. Here the person itself is attacked, such as its lifestyle or his own taste. Unfair dialectics can also be expressed by doubting one's own competence, knowledge, or motivation. Other examples of unfair dialectics are the insinuation, the generalisation (All people are ...) or also that someone interrupts you constantly and does not let you speak. Thanks to these techniques, which can be used by any person, people tend to become insecure. And there you are again at a point where you are more sensitive to manipulation. That is not completely true, because you've already been manipulated, so to speak. Nevertheless, something can still follow on that. One could enumerate many other versions, but in principle the manipulation by thinking is about influencing the way of thinking no matter in which direction.

## 6.2. How you can use manipulative techniques yourself

Even if you already know many manipulation techniques in theory, you still have to be able to use them skilfully and succeed with them. With good manipulation techniques one reaches it among other things to divert interpersonal discussions in the desired direction and to appear more convincing as well as more interesting. In this topic, one must note the difference between persuading and persuading. The persuade is actually also a manipulation kind, is however rather negatively afflicted since one presses someone rather to something and can make it thereby uncertain. It is therefore better to persuade. In the process, the inner attitude towards the subject has changed in the person opposite, which means that he feels more comfortable with the decision and the opinion is much more positive.

The most important thing is actually to let the whole manipulative process appear unconsciously and not reveal it. If you tell your adversary in advance that you are going to manipulate him, it will not work. This

will give him the chance to prepare himself. If he does not have this information, he can be manipulated more easily and thinks that he himself had the idea for something and was not manipulated. Earlier we

already listed some manipulation techniques that are so commonly used. However, there are also other techniques that can be used specifically to steer conversations. The first method, which virtually anyone can use, is the so-called multiple solution method. To be more precise, this means that you offer the other person several possible solutions, between which he can choose. The trick here is to steer the decision to an answer that you yourself would prefer. This can be done, for example, by adding an unobtrusive comment or verb to an answer option. You say, for example, that the other person can do one thing or insist on the other thing. By using the word insist, the other person's own opinion becomes clear in his subconscious, and he will almost certainly decide in favour of the other option.

Example: *"You have the choice: 3,500 euros gross and a company car, or you insist on the 5,000 euros and probably will not get the job in the end."* → *absolventa.de*

In addition, there is another way to manipulate the opposite in the form of two choices. Instead of asking, for example, whether the other person would like to do something with you, you give them two choices as to what they should do, e.g., eat or go to the movies. So, you should not ask something and thus make yourself dependent on the other person in one way, but immediately take the initiative yourself and offer two choices. In this way, you have already made the decision for the other person as to whether you want to do something.

Another manipulation technique results from the fact that one appears dominant and self-confident in a conversation, and the listener thereby builds up a certain basis of trust. A popular method for this is to list and present one's own competencies in a psychologically intelligent way. The only important thing is that you do not present them directly, otherwise it comes across as arrogant and is not well appreciated. In such a case, the one who manipulates in this case represents a kind of role model to follow. Usually, certain decisions are followed by consequences, which can either be positive or negative. These consequences can of course be used as a manipulation tool as well. Rationally speaking, humans always opt for the option that appears positive, but emotionally speaking, they usually opt for the more comfortable method, as we are programmed by nature to have the least amount of work as possible.

In marketing, this manipulation technique likes to work with reward and punishment. Here it is obvious which we choose. For example, our boss wants us to fulfil a condition, but also to receive compensation for it, e.g., in the form of a salary increase or a promotion. In this case, the condition of being transferred to another city, for example, because we are needed there, would be very profitable for the boss. However, he manipulated us with a salary increase in order to achieve his goal.

## 7. Perception of manipulation

### 7.1. How to recognize if / when being manipulated?

There are many signs you might want to pay attention to next time you talk to someone. These will help you to recognize whether the other person might be trying to manipulate you or not. Typical feelings you will probably have in, or after a manipulative conversation, are mainly those of fear, guilt, threat, and obligation. As mentioned in a previous chapter, when being manipulated, the manipulators' easiest way to make you its target, is by using your fears and insecurities against you. This will help them achieving their goal by using your weaknesses. A Californian therapist once defined people who use manipulation to achieve something, as *"not capable of asking for what they want in a direct way"*. Among others, she has also concluded that manipulation itself, is an *"emotionally unhealthy psychological strategy"*.

If you ever felt like you have done something you did not even want to do in the first place, but you did it anyways because you knew you would feel guilty if you did not match the culprits' expectations, then I can assure you, that you have been a victim of manipulation. There are two main techniques used by manipulators, which I will inform you about. These will allow you to recognize them, and hopefully protect yourself from being someone's target.

The first technique is applied by starting a conversation by mentioning a small, yet reasonable request. Afterwards, once the victim has agreed to the first request, a second larger wish is requested. Unfortunately, in most cases, the culprit achieves his goal.

The second and last technique I will inform you about is quite the opposite of the first one. This one is known as the *"door-in-the-face"* technique and consists in starting by requesting the larger wish. Only after that request has been accepted, the manipulator will then lead the conversation to a smaller request, which was his main goal in the first place. The reason for this is because most people tend to feel guilty if rejecting a second reasonable request. In this case, the victim is most likely to say yes.

### 7.3. Diverse ways of winning an argument

Often, we have to in order to achieve our goals or have wishes fulfilled, such as a pay rise. Of course, there are also very specific tricks to decide such discussions rather in one's favor and to achieve the goal. Discussions are actually structured in such a way that a basic thesis is put forward by one side and sometimes also by the other side, and this must then be argued for, or evidence found. This results in a conclusion based on the argumentation, which then contains the decision. In discussions, too, there is the factual as well as the emotional level.

To win a discussion, it is first of all important to have good facts on board that can support your thesis. Facts are the most important tool for your own argumentation, because they are based on facts, and you usually can't come up with a good counter against them. In addition to these facts, there are of course some rhetorical tricks as well as some posture tricks that can be used on a manipulative basis. One highly effective way is to consistently lower the voice, meaning both the speed and the pitch. Lowering your voice in this way has been shown to make you appear more confident and self-assured, which in a way intimidates the other person, making you appear more convincing. It is also important to let the other person talk and, above all, to respect them, i.e., questions to the other person or similar are very popular. By letting the

other person talk, you can say that they feel more valued, which is why they are more tolerant and understand you better.

The two most important points in the area of rhetoric are in the area of emotions and defensiveness. Since it is well known that people are more susceptible to manipulation in the area of emotions, they should try to suppress their emotions and remain on a factual level for their own protection. Moreover, showing emotions also makes one appear insecure, which would be very counterproductive for winning the discussion. The other important point is, as I said, the defensive attitude, or rather not getting into this defensive attitude. The best way to avoid this problem is to put oneself in other perspectives and form other arguments from them. Because once you get into a defensive position, i.e., you have to defend yourself and give up the role of the leader in the discussion, you have already lost. In general, it is important for the perception of the other person that you take the lead and lead the discussion, which makes you look even more secure. The most obvious point in the area of body language is posture, including gestures and facial expressions. The basic rule is to keep eye contact, which makes you look interested and at the same time more confident, and to always keep your arms open, i.e., don't hide them in your pockets. By keeping your arms open, you radiate openness, also towards the arguments of the other person. Nevertheless, the movements with arms and hands should be smooth, i.e., do not make any hectic movements. In general, one can say that all these techniques should be carried out inconspicuously, otherwise one's authority could appear untrustworthy.

## 8. Manipulation in medical terms

### 8.1. Definition

***“The act, process, or instance of manipulating especially a body part by manual examination and treatment.”***

**Definition by: Merriam-Webster**

Were you aware that manipulation can be used for treatments in medicine? Turns out that in medicine, manipulation is defined as *“the process of instantly manipulating a part of the body by examination or treatment...”*, meaning that manipulation is applied as a therapeutic technique. In the following sub-chapter.

### 8.2. Therapeutic manipulation

Manipulative treatments are mostly applied in osteopathy<sup>2</sup>, physiotherapy<sup>3</sup> and orthopedics<sup>4</sup>. In general, manipulative therapies are mostly used for muscle, joint & posture problems in both, adults, and children. So, if you have been injured during a sports class, you might have visited a doctor specialized in one of the mentioned medical fields. Let’s get to know physiotherapy a little more in detail, since it is probably the only one you might be slightly familiar with.

For starters, physiotherapy is a manipulative therapy that is mainly meant to treat people suffering from arthritis. I know, it sounds strange, right? I wonder who came up with such nouns. In short, arthritis is a disease that causes one or several joints to get inflamed or swelled. In this case, physiotherapy can treat such kinds of joint muscle problems and help the concerned individuals maintaining a mobile life by improving their ability of movement. This type of therapy includes different treatments which usually include specific exercises, massages, or machines that relief muscular pain, which all manipulate the human body in some way. Believe it or not, there is a machine that can actually help to relieve pain. Turns out that the TENS<sup>5</sup> machine has been invented back in 1970 and has constantly been applied since then. Its job is to block pain signals from being sent to the brain. More specifically, this device contains pads that stick to your skin and send pulses to nerves causing a relief of pain. Sounds kind of impossible, although many studies have shown that this treatment method has effectively reduced the feeling of pain.

There are many other manipulative therapies, although all of them are in some way meant to improve movement and relieve muscular pain. Below are two further examples of manipulative therapies:

- Spinal manipulative therapy also known as manual therapy, is a combination of movement, massage and exercise and is mostly used to relief long-term low back pain as well as neck and shoulder pain. This treatment method is frequently used; however, it only shows short term improvement.

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<sup>2</sup> Osteopathy: treatment of medical disorders using manipulation and massage of skeleton and musculature

<sup>3</sup> Physiotherapy: treatment in which physical methods such as massage of skeleton and musculature are used

<sup>4</sup> Orthopedy: used to treat disorders of the musculoskeletal system (injuries and dysfunctions in the spine)

<sup>5</sup> TENS machine: transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation machine

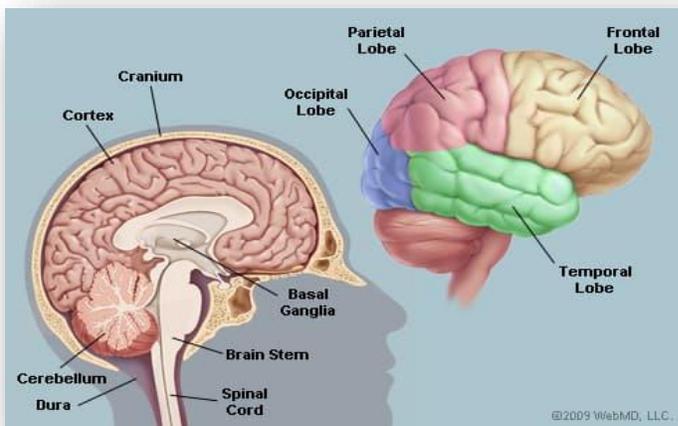
- Cervical manipulation usually named “neck manipulation” is applied to adjust the spinal column. As the name gives away, it relieves neck pain.

Overall, manipulative therapies have proven the capacity to improve movements in joints as well as reducing all kinds of other muscular pain. In medicine, manipulative therapies are occasionally recommended to treat muscular issues, allergies, and respiratory conditions in children. Nevertheless, adults usually get therapeutic support because of muscle soreness. Studies have shown that around 50% of adults have experienced manipulative therapies. However, experts claim that further studies are needed before highly and recommending manipulative treatments.

While reading, you might have asked yourself why these treatments are defined as “manipulative”, or not. To be clear, when a physiotherapist massages your muscles or when using the TENS machine, you are basically using techniques that manipulate your muscles as well as other body parts. The TENS machine is the perfect example for this since it manipulates your body, including your brain by stopping the sensation of pain. What we learn from this, is that manipulation should not always be considered as negative. In this case, it is used for the patient’s benefit since its objective is to promote their mobility and flexibility.

### 8.3. What parts of the brain can be manipulated?

When you are being manipulated, there are various parts of the lateral prefrontal cortex that are involved. At least, that is what scientists were convinced of. They were not sure though, so they decided to test it by using rats. Before talking about the *Impromptu* experiment, I have got to inform you about the human brain first. Before you ask, no, a rat’s brain is not exactly like a human brain. However, both structures and functions are very similar.



I am convinced that you have a brain, and that you are aware that it is your source of intelligence. As a friend, I would be deeply concerned if you had not realized this.

So, let’s start with some basic facts about this giant and powerful organ. In fact, I have already mentioned the organ part so we can move on. The human brain contains over one hundred billion nerves whose job is to communicate thanks to connections called synapses. To make it easier, the brain has been divided into four main parts called lobes. You shall observe the image above to understand what I

am about to explain. The blue part located in the back of the brain is called *occipital lobe* and is connected to your vision. This does not mean that you go blind if that specific part gets damaged just in case you are worried. The temporal lobe which you have on both sides of your brain, behind your ears is involved with speech, short-term memory, musical rhythm, and some smell perception. You might have had someone tell you that the left side of your brain does not have the same functions as the right side, which is not one

hundred percent correct. The left side known as the *dominant temporal lobe*, helps you learning, understanding, and remembering verbal information. Have you figured out the name of the right side? Exactly, it is the *non-dominant lobe*. This part supports your learning and helps not forgetting non-verbal information. Meaning, that your brain reminds you to do the dishes when your parents have asked you hours ago. Yet, the dominant lobe might differ depending on the person. This is part of the reason some people are left-handers and others are right-handers. It all depends on the dominant and non-dominant lobe's position.

Now that you have been informed about some basics, we can move on to the *Impromptu* experiment. In this attempt, rats were injected with muscimol, which is a drug. Let me just add that I hope you did not know about this substance. A dose was inserted into the motor cortex<sup>6</sup> to shut off the rat's neurons. No worries, this was only temporarily. Guess what the neuroscientists learned thanks to this research? The rats could not accomplish their task. They did not just learn something new, they found evidence too! Isn't that fascinating? Now we know that neurons are fundamental in that specific brain region. Here comes the entertaining part of this experiment. The experts ended up damaging that specific region of the poor rat's brain. Mistakes happen though and you can always find a way out of it, just like the neuroscientists did. Their solution was to destroy the region that had been damaged previously. Eventually, they waited ten days and the rat was still able to press the lever correctly. Can you imagine that? I mean, who is still in shape after not working out for over a week? To conclude, we can say that it is thanks to the damage that the experts could confirm that the injured region of the rat's brain was never actually associated with its behavior.

All in all, the scientists ended up proving that the brain is not capable of communicating with your body, allowing you to make specific movements, if the neurons are not active in the motor cortex region. Nevertheless, after committing the terrible mistake, leading them to destroy that specific brain region, the rat somehow managed to complete its task. So maybe in the end, the neurons are not necessary in the motor cortex after all. Concerning the manipulative aspect of this experiment, scientists conclude that when manipulating one region of an organisms' brain, it ends up affecting certain behaviors, even though these are not dependent on that region. They believe that the explanation for this, is simply because the different brain parts are so firmly connected.

Regarding this interesting discovery, an expertised in optogenetics concluded:

*"I am not surprised that permanent and temporary manipulations cause different behavioral effects. Because the brain is a dynamic system and operates on different time scales, any sort of manipulation may show only one piece of the picture."*

– Karl Deisseroth of Stanford University, California

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<sup>6</sup> Motor cortex: region in the brain that controls the execution of movement

## 8.4. Genetic manipulation / engineering

Genetic manipulation, also known as genetic engineering, are each two nouns you have surely heard before. Still, I am sure you do not know its meaning, so maybe it is time I explain it to you. For starters, genetic manipulation is defined by the modification of an organisms' deoxyribonucleic acid. Did I forget to mention that this strange word stands for DNA? I apologize, I tend to forget that people use such abbreviations, just because it sounds smart, without even knowing their meaning. Without getting into detail, DNA is the genetic information contained in body cells. Basically, it is what makes you unique and differentiable from everybody else, yet physically similar to your family members. That being the case, you are born with two copies of each gene<sup>7</sup> from each parent.

Now, how is a deoxyribonucleic acid modified? Genetic engineering can be done in many ways. This can either be achieved by changing one of the DNA's base pair<sup>8</sup> or introducing a copy of a gene coming from a different organism<sup>9</sup>, which I will happily explain in more detail. This type of genetic manipulation, called microinjection, is one of the easiest and most used ways to manipulate an organisms' cell.

Foremost, I'll inform you of the two main steps microinjection includes. First, the gene called "the of interest" must be found in an organism. This is a gene that can come from any other animal, vegetable or microbial species and can be transferred to any of the mentioned species as well. The second step understands isolating the gene of interest and multiplying it, in order to have several copies of that same gene. For these steps, several micro instruments are necessary.

Let's have a closer look at a genetic modified animal:

For this example, the gene of interest originates from a specific fish, called *conger eel*<sup>10</sup>. The soon to-be genetically modified organism will be some salmon. In this case, specialists did some research concerning both, the salmon's as well as the conger eel's beneficial characteristics. On the one hand, the conger eel has the benefit of fast and strong growth, thanks to their growth-hormones which can be produced at any time throughout the year. The salmon, on the other hand, can only produce the growth-hormones during summertime. Comparing both, we can conclude that the conger eel has the advantage of growing much faster than the salmon. So, the goal will be to increase the salmon's growth-hormones production.

As mentioned before, the first step consists in finding the gene of interest (the one responsible for the constant growth) in the conger eel and multiplying that gene in order to obtain several copies of it. Next, those copies are inserted to the salmon's fertilized egg using a micropipette. If this sounds unreal and unimaginable to you, try to put it this way: visualize the salmon's fertilized egg placed on a transparent piece of glass. Then, using a micropipette, a scientist adds the gene copies to the egg while his assistant uses a bigger pipette, so that the egg is immobilized. In case this wasn't helpful either, just check out the image below.

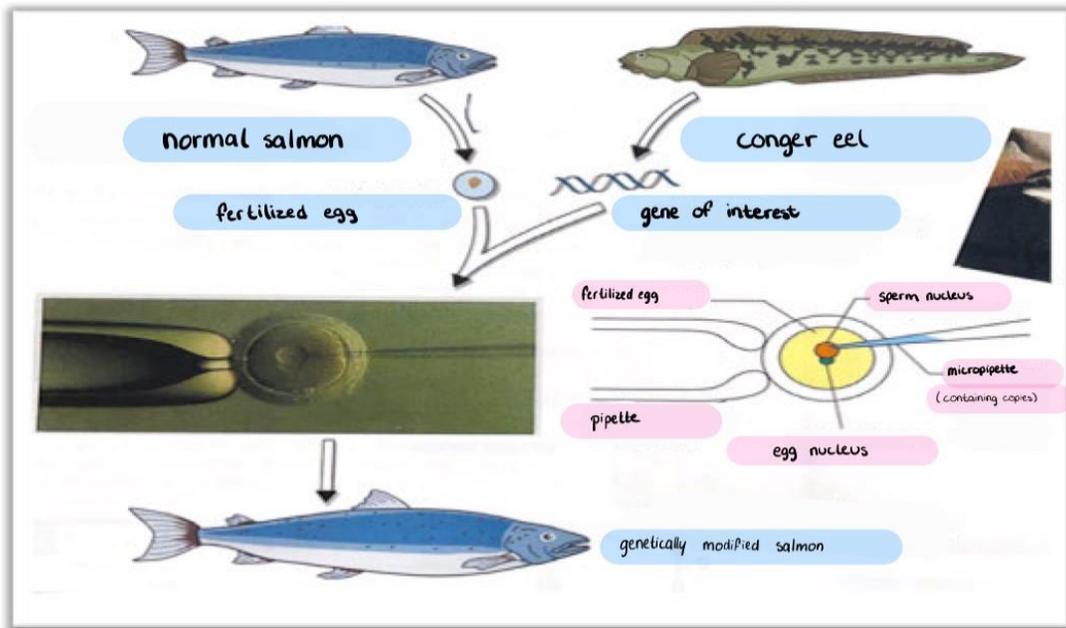
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<sup>7</sup> A gene: a unit that is transferred from one generation to another and determines some of the characteristics of the newborn

<sup>8</sup> DNA's base pairs: two bases pair together to form the structure of DNA. Base A (adenine) can only pair with T (thymine) and G (guanine) always pairs with (cytosine).

<sup>9</sup> Introduction of a gene copy from one organism to another is called: gene transfer

<sup>10</sup> Conger eel in French : anguille de roche



*Image explaining the process of gene transfer by microinjection*

Now, you might wonder why or if genetic manipulation is necessary. Regarding gene transfer which you have just read about, it allows diversity as well as the evolution of different species, avoiding them from extinction. Then of course, you should be aware that humans do such experiments on animals, because they know that they might benefit from it as well. Isn't that selfish? Yet, you would rather buy a bigger salmon than a tiny one, right? If you were a fisherman, I am sure it would facilitate your job if the fishes grew very quickly, allowing you to catch a higher number of big fishes. In other aspects, genetic engineering itself, has advanced and improved the production of several medical products such as human insulin<sup>11</sup>, which is much needed. So, to answer the question, yes, genetic engineering is necessary and has allowed several improvements throughout the years. It has helped, not only to advance required medication, but to create plant and animal variation along with diversity as well.

<sup>11</sup> Human insulin: synthetic hormone used to control blood sugar in people suffering from diabetes type 1

## 9. Conclusion

Thanks to the research we have done over the past couple of months, we can now make use of them, hoping to answer our main question. So, ***how many mind games have been played on you today?*** Before getting into it, you should know that this is not a question we can easily answer to since it might vary from person to person, depending on their everyday life. Nevertheless, we will make sure to be as realistic as possible. As a group, we figured that the easiest way to do this, is probably by picturing a usual day in your life. In the end, you will realize how often you actually get manipulated throughout the day, without even noticing it.

Let's analyze a day in our life and try to detect who or what might manipulate us in any way. First things first, everyone starts their day by waking up in the morning, right? In this case, I cannot think of anything that might in some way have a manipulative influence on an individual. Moving on to getting ready, unless your clothes can talk, we do not believe that there is anything suspicious either. In a day, manipulation usually starts when you first talk to someone or/and when you leave the house and enter a public space. Imagine you run into your parents in the morning. If you have a dog, you are probably told to take it out at least once a day. Now, depending on the way you are asked to accomplish this daily task, your parents might be manipulating you without consciously being aware of it. Instead of them asking *"Hey Bob, could you please take Penny out for a walk?"* they might put it this way: *"Hey Bob, I am running late, I would appreciate it if you could take out Penny. Bye."* Comparing both, in the first way of putting the question, your parents nicely ask you to accomplish your daily task, without having further expectations. In opposition, the second way of putting it is more of an order than a question. In this case, the person has already decided that you will have to take the dog out, yet does not directly ask for you to do it. Additionally, they add a reason for why they will not be able to do it, leaving you with no option but to accept the expected task. As you can tell, both want to achieve the same goal. However, by using the second expression, you are more likely to accept it, since you are left with no other choice.

After having gotten ready and taken the dog out, you probably leave the house and walk to the nearest bus station. Here, you patiently wait for your bus to arrive, which is mostly too late. Depending on whether you are a patient person or not you might check online, to find out exactly how late your bus is. I for example, am not a patient person at all, so as soon as I notice the bus running late, I check out the "Mobilitéit" application. This allows me to know exactly how much longer I will have to wait. So, here is how this app can in some way manipulate your brain: if the buses' delay stands between one and two minutes, using the app, you will observe a +1 or +2 written in green. However, if a longer delay is expected, the specific number of minutes will either turn orange or red. Human brains are tricked into defining the color of green in a positive way and the one of orange or red as a negative way. Meaning, as soon as you put eyes on the red "+9", your brain immediately understands that there is a longer delay, without specifically having checked the minutes. Even though this example perhaps seems completely strange, it is a point that proves how our brain is manipulated into thinking and/or believing in certain assumptions. Once you are on the bus, you might be surrounded by advertisements, even though they are not necessarily exposed on huge posters. Notice the little display that informs you of the upcoming bus stops? I am sure you have noticed the "little" advertisements in between stops. Be it the "NET OUNI MENG MASK" ad or the "Mam Vêlo op d'Schaff oder an d'Schoul" that have been displayed for months now. These are intentionally exposed on the display, since bus companies are aware that people constantly check the upcoming bus stops. Additionally, in a bus you usually sit still and look out of the window or forward, which is also where the display is set. Since you have nothing else to observe or simply look at, you are most likely to actually read and analyze the exposed commercial. Have a closer look at both advertisements:



Notice how both have specific details, making people want to look at them and read the content? Let's take the first one as an example. In this poster, you can detect at least five different fonts. Generally, your brain is quickly attracted to bold, underlined as well as capitalized words. In this case, both, bold and capitalized **"MICH"** meaning "me" and the underlined and capitalized **"GESUND"** meaning "healthy" stand out right away. Obviously, the creators have done that in purpose, making it attention-seeking. On top of that, the mentioned advertisements run in every single bus or/and train in the country. This is a technique used to make individuals remember certain advertisements along with their slogans<sup>12</sup>. Then again, such manipulative techniques are very often used in advertising because of their success. If this was not the case, I would not have remembered both posters. You can now take some time to try and count how many times you have been exposed to advertisements in a day. I bet that you are soon going to notice that you run into so many of them, that it is nearly impossible to get a specific number out of it. Then of course, people who constantly frequent bigger cities, run into ads more often than people living in smaller towns. So, as I said in the beginning, it all depends on the persons' lifestyle. We like to believe that such advertisements that are exposed in public transport have an influence on you at least twice, be it once in each bus or/and train<sup>13</sup>.

Moving on, let's say it is Friday and your first class in the morning is math. The topic that is being handled at the moment is trigonometry and your teacher is trying to teach you about the different existing types of triangles. After his explanation, he adds something similar to: *"At this point you should all know the different names of triangles by heart"* or *"For those who still don't know these triangles, you should memorize this until our next lesson"*. Even though this might not sound manipulative right away, it still is if you give it some thought. If we analyze it closely, we will come to the conclusion that the teachers' goal is to, in some way, manipulate you into thinking that you should in theory, know the entire subject already. Meaning that if

<sup>12</sup> A slogan: usually a phrase used by companies that in some way define their goal as a brand - example of NIKE: "Let's do it"

<sup>13</sup> Theory: if you take two different buses to go to school in the morning and then two to get back home, you will have been influenced at least four times by different advertisements.

you do not, you will feel guilty. Some people might even feel like they are less intelligent than those who understood it right away. This is one of the techniques teachers constantly use, unconsciously or not, so that you feel the need to study the subject and make sure to understand it completely until the upcoming lesson. If you now compare all the different lessons you have throughout the day, you might end up realizing how often teachers have manipulated you into doing or thinking something. Let's say you have four different lessons a day, you could say that you have been manipulated by the teachers at least eight times in total, meaning twice during each lesson.

Lunch break approaches and one of your friends wishes for you to go eat with them. Yet, instead of nicely asking for it: *"Hey Lucy, would you like to have lunch with me in fifteen minutes?"*, people tend to put it this way: *"Hey Lucy, when should we have lunch?"*. In this case, the person has already decided that you will have lunch with them, leaving you with no choice but accompanying them. Another way to ask, would be by augmenting why you should accompany them, in a way that you might feel bad for them if you decline the request: *"Could you please have lunch with me? Otherwise, I would have to eat alone, and I don't feel comfortable sitting in the canteen by myself."* Either way, I am completely sure that people try this on you, at least every now and then.

Besides having lunch during breaks, I believe you check your phone too. Scrolling through Instagram and watching influencers' stories constantly make you think or believe in something that might or might not correspond to reality. As we talked about in a previous chapter, an influencer must promote products from different brands repeatedly. Thus, they only inform you of all the positive aspects one product might have and mostly exaggerate it as well, to make you believe in its quality and potential. Needless to say, that an influencer does this on purpose to convince you to buy whatever they are promoting. If you spend about three hours on social media per day, we believe it has an influence on you at least eight times (per day). Be it through promotions or popular individuals exposing their "perfect" lifestyle, making you want to live the way that they do. Additionally, if you often watch television after a long day of school, that might add another five times you have been manipulated.

However, since it is Friday evening, you might not go home right away after school. You will either go out and have a drink with friends, of course, only if you are old enough, or go to a store to get some clothes. If this is the case, you will once again be influenced by the way people look, act and talk to you. When you go to a store for example, you surely noticed how most workers are very respectful and kind. They welcome you with a huge smile on their face and come up to you, wondering if you need help finding something specific. What most clients are not aware of, is that they are basically "forced" to act and talk nicely, because it is the easiest way to manipulate people into buying something. Humans are more likely to buy something in a store where the workers show respect and kindness. This makes them want to buy something in order to somehow "thank" the salesmen for the way that they acted towards you, even though you do not owe them anything.

These were several examples of where and in what way mind games can be played on you in only one day. As we have mentioned, it is clearly impossible to get a concrete number out of it. However, we tried to be as specific as possible, thanks to the different examples we used.

Below, is a list resuming the different ways in which you might get manipulated along with how often it probably happens in a single day:

<b>Presence of manipulation (Based on the examples we used)</b>	<b>Number of how many mind games <u>might</u> have been played on you <u>in a day</u></b>
• Parents asking you to complete a task:	2x
• Informative apps (example of the Mobilitéit-app):	3x
• Advertisements in public transport:	4x
• Professionals in the educational field:	3x
• Request/influences from friends / people you are surrounded by:	4x
• Social media – influencers:	8x
• In public spaces (stores, restaurants...):	1x
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>25x mind games in a day</b>

According to our main examples and the calculations we have accomplished, we finally came to the conclusion that every individual having a similar lifestyle to the one we presented (living with their parents, going to school, having social media...), probably has someone playing mind games on them around **25 times in only one day**. Until after doing research on this topic, the three of us had not exactly realized how present manipulation actually is in someone's daily life. However, now that we do know everything about mind games and where / from whom it is used, the result we got through the calculations did not surprise us. On the contrary, we are convinced that mind games are played on us in so many different ways, that we do not even realize yet.

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