

## **OW2P Study - Peer Influence (Part 6)**

### **Goal**

Too many attribute those intermittent disturbing instances of disobedience to the pressure our peers exert upon us. Is it really peer pressure? Is there literally someone “making” us smoke cigarettes, drink liquor or smoke weed? The threat is peer influence. Peer influence gradually and consistently speaks “do as I do,” hoping we eventually give up, give in, and then give out. In this section athletes will learn to identify peer pressure and peer influence and ways of defusing them both.

### **Key Scriptures**

Psalms 139:13-16; Romans 12:1-2; Genesis 1:26; Proverbs 14:21; James 4:7

### **Warm Up**

Pass a small piece of paper to everyone in the group. No one should write his or her name on the paper. Instead, write one fact about yourself that most people do not know or could not guess. It could be anything. It could be a characteristic, a place you’ve traveled, an embarrassing moment, or a rare accomplishment. When done, the papers should be collected and redistributed at random. Begin to read the facts.

Have the students attempt to place the fact with the person. Have them consider: What was most surprising?, Most embarrassing?, Most impressive?, Most daring?, etc. Does this information make your group more interesting? Discuss what it would be like for everyone to have had the same fact on his or her paper.

### **Watch**

Show the Week 6 video — “Peer Influence”

### **Workout**

One of the miracles of life is the fact that of the billions of people who have populated the earth, no two thumbprints are the same. We are all different, and amazingly so. Different eye color, hair texture and color, complexion, height, build, voice, and the list goes on and on. Remarkably for many, being different is the nightmare. Instead we want to be “like everyone else.”

Peer pressure refers to those occasions where a friend insists that you participate in a certain behavior. Peer pressure is not the common occurrence. Peer influence is. Peer influence is when your circle of friends engages in a certain behavior and you become exposed to the opportunity to join or reject that behavior.

That “valley of decision” is where dreams take flight or die. That is where we distinguish

ourselves from the crowd or become another statistic. How do you handle the “valley of decision?”

**Letting the air out of peer pressure?** Embrace who you are! You are a one-of-a-kind original. You are a walking, talking, living, breathing miracle. You are no coincidence. The mere fact that you have breath proves that you are part of God’s design and intention. Doing or not doing what a friend presses you to do or not do, does not define who you are.

**Diluting the power of influence?** Measure your dreams! Dreams are abstract, how can they be measured? Simply examine your dreams and what it will take for you to fulfill them. Will the behavior that tempts you assist or impede your progress? When you get your answer make your decision. Suddenly you will see peer influence lose its impact in your life. Your personal dreams and goals power you through the valley of decision.

The word *now* spelled backwards is *won*. Decide now how you will respond to various situations where your peers might find you. Prepare for both peer pressure and influence by establishing a course of action before the temptation comes. Decide *now* and you’ve already *won*! Through the power of now you can master the valley of decision. If you do, all of the issues that prematurely plague young lives will not even be a factor in yours.

### **Workout Questions**

1. Read Psalms 139:13-17. Discuss the details of what makes you special. How were you made?
2. Think about other objects of God’s creation (animals, natural wonders, etc.) What one detail in how you were made distinguishes humankind from all other creations of God? (Genesis 1:26)
3. Read Romans 12:1-2. List teenage behaviors, styles of dress, etc., that are products of conformity and influence. How can a student transform into the young adult that God expects him/her to be?
4. How can you prepare *now* to respond to the various situations you will be put in?

### **Wrap Up**

The urgency to resist peer pressure and peer influence is based on the reality that even “good kids” are getting caught up in behaviors and attitudes that surprise everyone. How many times have you heard someone say, “He was such a good kid, how did he get kicked off the team for using drugs?” or “She was such a nice girl, how did she end up pregnant?”

Too many find out the truth the hard way, as stated in Proverbs 14:12. We learn in the end that the devil is playing for keeps. We learn the hard way sadly when it’s too late. This urgency to resist is dependent upon one simple but profound action: submitting to God (James 4:7). Submit to God and resist temptation, then you become the influencer, not of bad but good.

Write on a piece of paper *now* and hang it in your locker as a reminder that if you decide *now*, then you have already *won*. This week, keep track of the times you were reminded of the *now* principle.

### **Bible Reference:**

James 4



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