



ARTIFACTS

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Identification With the Need to Achieve

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While flipping through the pages of *Seventeen*, among the numerous makeup, fashion and perfume advertisements, a half-page ad caught my eye. It was in split-screen format with a cool blue background. On the left stood a grim-faced girl who had just stepped off a yellow school bus full of rowdy children and a screaming driver. In one arm she held two, hefty schoolbooks and in the other was an overloaded backpack. Her nothing-but-average appearance consisted of an unflattering, black and white, patterned school dress, tightly buttoned up to her neck, a matching headband, and long, white socks pulled up to her knees. The sky was dim, gray and cloudy.

On the right of the page stood a smiling young woman who had just stepped out of a luxury vehicle with the helping hand of her handsome chauffeur. With long, flowing hair, she held a couple of books as if she were posed for a photo shoot. Her fashionable outfit added to the glamour with an interestingly patterned, button-up dress adorned with a sixties inspired belt. Under the beautiful blue skies, she left a few of the top buttons undone for subtle sex appeal. Interestingly enough, the figure on both sides of the page was the same; just as the dress she was wearing. Below the differing depictions was Upgrade! with an explanation in a lower box: Upgrade your life! Upgrade to Tampax Pearl®! With three fabulous details, its our best protection ever!

Even though Tampax Pearl® Tampons aim to meet the physiological needs of a woman, the ad found in *Seventeen* Magazine provides another rationale: identifying

with the desire to achieve and grasp control of your life. In Jib Fowles article, *Advertisings Fifteen Basic Appeals* he presents fifteen needs that advertisements can appeal to. Although the need for attention seems adequate enough for an outward transformation as presented in the Tampax Pearl® ad, the Upgrade your life! slogan hints to a deeper meaning: the need to achieve. In todays competitive society, it is essential that advertisers link their products to winning and success, and the need to achieve does just that. As Fowles indicates, the need to achieve is the drive that energizes people, causing them to strive in their lives and careers (Fowles 82). This need for achievement flourishes in todays cutthroat society, because people relentlessly strive for individual advancement, longing to rival and surpass others (Fowles 82) and whoever else may be blocking their pathway to success and personal fulfillment.

Strategically placed in a publication with articles and feature stories loaded with love, beauty, and overall life advice that young girls cling to, the Tampax Pearl® ad slipped in among headlines like *Amazing Makeover Ideas*, *Be the Girl You Want to Be*, and *Whats Up With My Breasts?* Tampax masked their true purpose (to

provide the best protection) with the idea that they too, just as the rest of *Seventeen*, could improve your life and aid you to accomplish something difficult. The entire scene portrayed on the left side of the advertisement identifies with what teen girls do not want. They do not want to look like a little girl in a school dress. They definitely do not want to ride the school bus, and they certainly do not desire the unhappiness drawn from the grim, pale faced look on the girls face. However, the visual to the right is everything they want to be. Teenage girls want to be this happy, fashionable, attractive, young woman with great hair. They want every day to be full of joy and blue skies. And they most definitely fancy possession of a striking man who will not only lift away their weighty troubles, but also be a gentleman and open the car door and help them to the curb. Although these things fail to bring great fortune, from the mindset of a less-than-confident teen girl who dives into the pages of *Seventeen* for life answers, an upgrade would overcome her obstacles and relatively place her at a higher standard. No longer would she be the little, unshapely girl. No longer would she feel as if the dark clouds were swarming in the skies above. She would excel beyond her former self and eventually rival and surpass others. And how would she do this? With Tampax Pearl® Tampons of course!

This is the message sent to millions of teenage girls across the United States of America and the world. Realistic? No. A tampon cannot change the weather or grant you lavish things like limousines and dashing men. A simple tampon will not even inform you with fashion sense. Truthfully, all a Tampax Pearl® Tampon can do is offer a form of protection during that one, bloated, crabby, horrifying week of the month. Despite what the tampon can actually do, advertisers know that the simple identification of their product with winning and success will do the trick. As Jib Fowles says, by giving form to peoples deep-lying desires, and picturing states of being that individuals privately yearn for, advertisers have the best chance of arresting attention and affecting communication (Fowles 73).

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