***‘The Gold Watch’***

Ringo is a thirty-five-year-old salesman with Anderson and Company, an old, established wholesaler of office equipment. He lives near Anderson’s headquarters in Atlanta with his wife and two adopted children.

On a recent sales tour of the Persian Gulf region, Ringo met Abdul, an office-equipment supplier who was interested in a line of photocopiers worth $1,250,000. Abdul told Ringo that he would give Ringo an order for the photocopiers in return for a gold Rolex watch worth $27,000. Abdul showed Ringo the watch he wanted in a catalog, and Ringo said that he would see what he could do.

On returning to the office, Ringo told Charles, his boss, about the proposition, asking if he could go ahead and buy the Rolex in order to obtain the order. Charles was outraged and said, “This is immoral! It’s not decent American business practice to offer bribes. We’re living in a civilized society. If I find out that you’ve been bribing customers to get orders, I’ll fire you on the spot! Have I made myself clear?”

After the confrontation with Charles, Ringo left the office and drove to the home of Angus, his friend and colleague. He explained his plight and then said, “What can I do, Angus? It’s an important order, and there’s a chance of repeat business: Abdul is interested in office furniture and fax machines, as well as additional photocopiers in the future.”

Angus thought for a moment and then said, “Ringo, why don’t you finance the deal yourself? Buy the guy his watch, and land the contract. With your commission and any future business, you’ll get a decent return on your investment. Don’t even tell Charles; he’s so old- fashioned – he has no idea how to do business with friends from other cultures.”

Ringo left Angus’s home, went to his car, thought for a few minutes, and then drove to his bank. Mr Grey, the bank manager and a close friend of Ringo’s father, listened to Ringo’s reasons for wanting the loan of $27,000. Despite the fact that Ringo’s checking account was overdrawn, he agreed to give Ringo the loan immediately.

The next day Ringo went to a jewelry store near his office and asked a clerk for the specific Rolex watch requested by Abdul. While he was waiting for the clerk to bring him the watch, Jane, Charles’s secretary, came into the store to buy a birthday present for her mother. Unobserved by Ringo, she watched as the clerk gave the watch to Ringo in exchange for

$27,000 cash. In her astonishment she forgot about finding a present for her mother, hurried back to Anderson and Company, burst into Charles’s office and asked, “How can a salesman who earns $50,000 a year afford a $27,000 watch?”

Charles was furious. He rushed out of his office and found Ringo just returning from the jewelry store. “You’re fired!” he shouted.

“Let me explain……….” muttered Ringo. “No excuses! I warned you!”

At that moment an email message appeared on Ringo’s phone. It read as follows: “NO LONGER INTERESTED IN PHOTOCOPIER DEAL. FOUND ALTERNATIVE SUPPLIER. - ABDUL.”

***The Gold Watch Discussion Sheet***

* Read ‘The Gold Watch’ case
* Rank the six characters in the story from 1 (the least objectionable) to 6 (the most objectionable). The six characters are Ringo, Abdul, Charles, Angus, Mr Grey and Jane.
* In small groups try to reach a group consensus in ranking characters, i.e. the group ranks the six characters, as in phase 2.
* Present your group rankings to the others.
* Finish with open discussion using the following questions as a stimulus:
  + What past experiences were brought to mind by the story of the gold watch? Which character did you identify with most strongly?
  + How were your rankings related to any differences between your personal and professional values? What choices did you have to make?
  + What similarities in rankings arose among the members of your group? What differences arose?
  + What issues seemed most important to your group?
  + How did value conflicts within your group affect the consensus process? How was conflict over values resolved?
  + What did this experience show you about the nature of individual values?
  + What can you generalize about an individual’s personal and professional values? What can you infer about the congruence of personal values and values expressed by or in organizations?