

【6】 ①

(1) There's nothing better than going out with friends for a meal, **but** even though you may all get on well, you also have a natural tendency to want to **stand out** from the crowd and **not** to seem to be **following the herd**. **Studies have shown that** when people make a choice from a menu, whether it's for food or drink, and hear what other people have chosen first, they are much more likely to go for something **different to the others**. This even extends to **ordering something they don't really want** — or certainly **don't want as much as a popular choice** — if it prevents them from looking like a sheepish follower.

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It might seem that this is because the group around the table is going to share each other's choices, so they want a more varied selection — **but** outside of particular cuisines where **this** is the norm, **there is no evidence** of ⁽²⁾**this** happening; people just ⁽³⁾grimly eat their substandard choice.

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There is **a simple way to avoid this**. When selecting from a menu with a group, make sure you **choose** what you want **before** any discussion of what people are going to order — and once you make your choice, **stick with it**. **Avoid** the temptation to switch away from what you really wanted in order to **maintain a difference and you'll** have **a more enjoyable meal**. Sometimes psychology means a degree of ⁽⁴⁾tricking yourself to get what's best.

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In recent years we have had a whole new opportunity to **study human attempts to stand out** from the crowd in the way we use **social media**. There have been some **studies** of the way that celebrities use **Twitter** in particular to share personal information to reinforce their celebrity status. This practice seems to have **encouraged others**, who don't have a **natural** group of followers, to **aggressively attack others** on social media to make themselves **stand out**, generating a form of **artificial** celebrity.

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As yet there has been **relatively little work done** on the psychology of those who **misuse social media**, but it seems that, ⁽⁵⁾as in the real world, **the best way to gain attention in social media is not to create artificial celebrity, but rather to achieve something of value in its own right that will bring with it personal distinction.**