

rated by a factor of about 14 from the average buyer's offer (about \$175).

From a rational perspective, both the ticket holders and the non-ticket holders should have thought of the game in exactly the same way. After all, the anticipated atmosphere at the game and the enjoyment one could expect from the experience should not depend on winning a lottery. Then how could a random lottery drawing have changed the students' view of the game—and the value of the tickets—so dramatically?

OWNERSHIP PERVADES OUR lives and, in a strange way, shapes many of the things we do. Adam Smith wrote, "Every man [and woman] . . . lives by exchanging, or becomes in some measure a merchant, and the society itself grows to be what is properly a commercial society." That's an awesome thought. Much of our life story can be told by describing the ebb and flow of our particular possessions—what we get and what we give up. We buy clothes and food, automobiles and homes, for instance. And we sell things as well—homes and cars, and in the course of our careers, our time.

Since so much of our lives is dedicated to ownership, wouldn't it be nice to make the best decisions about this? Wouldn't it be nice, for instance, to know exactly how much we would enjoy a new home, a new car, a different sofa, and an Armani suit, so that we could make accurate decisions about owning them? Unfortunately, this is rarely the case. We are mostly fumbling around in the dark. Why? Because of three irrational quirks in our human nature.

The first quirk, as we saw in the case of the basketball tickets, is that we fall in love with what we already have.