

Social Psychology

o The study of how our thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors are influenced by our interactions with others.



The image shows the title card for the TV show 'Friends', with the word 'F.R.I.E.N.D.S.' written in a stylized font above a photo of the six main cast members sitting at a table with drinks and a cake.

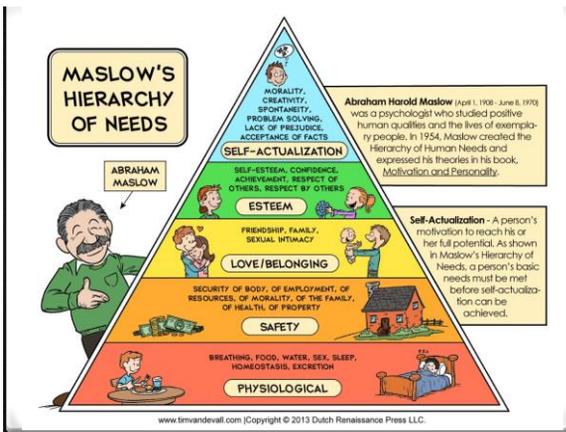
Social Cognition



- o A subfield of psychology that focuses on the study of how we perceive, store, and retrieve information about our social interactions.
- o Questions to Ask:
 - o Why do we choose the friends we do?
 - o What attracts us to certain people but not others?
 - o How well are adept at reading other's non-verbal cues?
 - o How do we adjust our perceptions of others to explain their behavior or our own behavior?

Why Do We Need Friends?

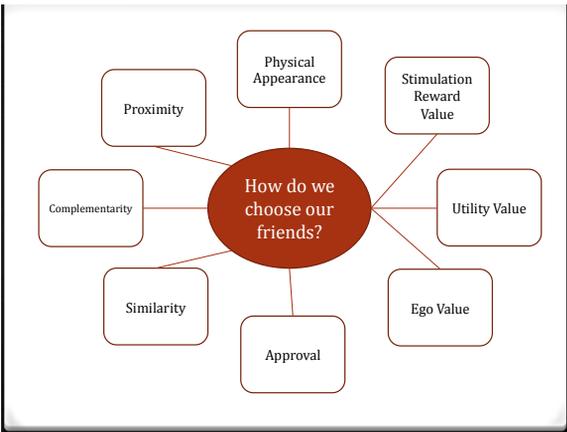
- o In infancy, we learn to associate personal contact w/our basic needs being met
- o As we age, close personal relationships are still associated w/basic needs, just the needs change
- o **Abraham Maslow & Carl Rogers** - social acceptance, feelings of love and affection necessary for psychological growth
- o **Bandura & Walters** - in order to develop, we must have praise, respect, love, affection, & a sense of achievement





How do we choose our friends?

Pages 522-525	Explanation	Examples
Proximity	Form friendships with people who are geographically close to us, eliminates fear of initial contact.	Form friends with classmates, church group, neighbors, etc.
Reward Values		
Physical Appearance		
Approval		
Similarity		
Complementarity		





Reward Values

Proximity helps make friends, but does not ensure friendships last.

- A friendship must serve some benefit:
- Reward Value System helps illustrate potential benefits of a relationship:
 - **Stimulation Reward Value:** the ability of a person to expose you to new ideas and experiences or to provide interest/entertainment
 - **Utility Value:** the ability of a person to help achieve a goal or outcome, willingness to give time and resources
 - **Ego-Support Value:** the ability of a person to provide approval, encouragement, and/or sympathy.



Physical Appearance & Approval

Physical Appearance:

- Mostly to form friendships w/people we consider "desirable" or "equal" to us
- People we consider attracted, we perceive as more interesting
- See friendships as an extension of own character
- Tendency to judge those deemed "unattractive" harshly

Approval

- Tendency to choose friends who agree with own views & ideas
- Serves to provide ego-support value
- **Caution** – we also want honest feedback tempered w/positive support



Similarity & Complementarity

Similarity

- Tend to choose friends w/people who have similar backgrounds, attitudes & interests
- Reasons for this:
 - Shared concept of what is fun
 - More likely to do stuff together
 - Easier to communicate
 - Feel uncomfortable w/ those who challenge our ideas

Complementarity

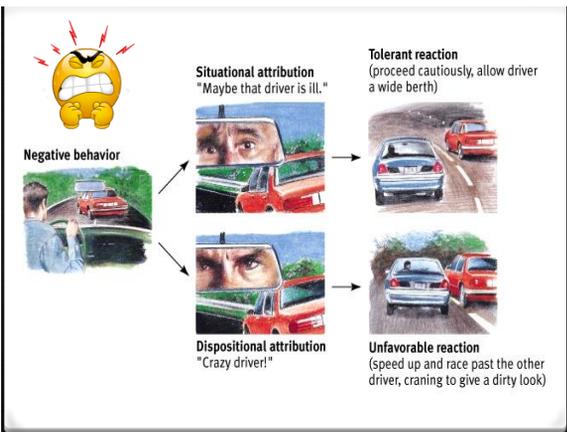
- Attraction that develops between opposite types of people
- The ability to supply what the other lacks
- Challenges our ideas & preconceptions
- Form of stimulation reward value
- Can't be too different





Attribution Theory

- o Developed by Fritz Heider (1958)
- o Definition: we explain someone's behavior by crediting either the external situation or the person's internal disposition.
- o Two Types:
 1. **Situational Attribution** - a person's reaction to an external stressor 
 2. **Dispositional Attribution** - a person's innate personality

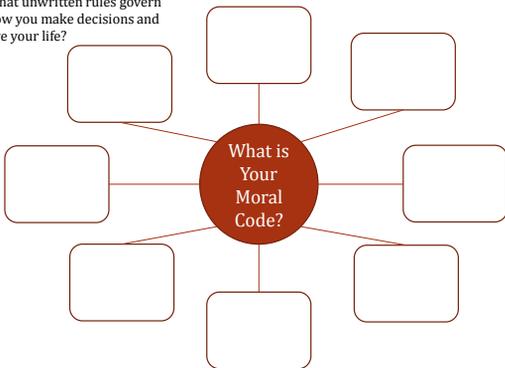


Fundamental Attribution Error

- **Definition:** a tendency for observers to *underestimate* the impact of situation and *overestimate* the impact of personal disposition
- People behave differently in different scenarios/situations
 - In people we know, we assume bad behavior is situational
 - In people we don't know, we assume bad behavior is dispositional
 - In ourselves, we attribute bad behavior as situational and good behavior as dispositional (**self-serving bias**)



What unwritten rules govern how you make decisions and live your life?





Personal Code of Ethics

- o From where did your personal moral code come?
- o What are some similarities between you and your partner's moral code?
- o What do you think would cause you to compromise your personal moral code?
- o What parts of your code would you NEVER violate?



Attitudes = Actions

- o **Attitude:** feelings, often influenced by our beliefs, that predispose us to respond (act) in a particular way. 
- o Two main paths to changing attitudes:
- o **Central Route Persuasion:** a change in attitude resulting from people focus on systematic arguments and respond with favorable thoughts 
 - o Occurs most in people who are interested in the subject
 - o Most commonly found in people who are naturally analytical
- o **Peripheral Route:** A change in attitude resulting from incidental cues 
 - o Occurs most commonly in people who rely on "snap judgements"
 - o Decisions can be made on the basis of physical attractiveness, because someone else liked it, gut feeling.



Actions = Attitude

- o Attitudes can follow behavior (actions)
- o By asking people to act against their personal beliefs in small increments, people can be persuaded to change their beliefs.
 - o **Foot-in the-Door Phenomenon:** once people agree to small request will be more likely agree with larger requests
- o Adoption of a new **role** can also affect attitude
 - o **Role** - a set of norms (expectations) about a social position that outlines how a person is supposed to behave in that position
 - o In a new role, a person will adopt a new set of norms (behaviors)
 - o **Stanford Prison Experiment - Philip Zimbardo** 
 - o **Abu Ghraib Prison Atrocities** 

Cognitive Dissonance Theory



◦ **Definition:** tendency to act in a manner to reduce the discomfort we feel when two of our thoughts are inconsistent or our actions are inconsistent with our beliefs.

◦ **Implications:**

- When dissonance occurs, we adapt beliefs to fit actions
- Tendency to justify the inconsistent thoughts/behaviors
- Engaging in positive behaviors can result in positive attitude



“Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act. Silence in the face of evil is evil itself.” ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Social Influence: Behavior is Contagious

- Society greatly influences behavior in areas of:
 - Conformity
 - Compliance
 - Obedience
 - Group Behavior
- **Chameleon Effect:** Chartrand & Baugh(1999)
 - Humans are natural mimics
 - Tendency to take on others' expressions, postures, and tone of voice (intonation)
 - Often adopt mood and attitudes of those around us (**mood linkage**)
 - Ex: contagious yawning, copycat violence



Conformity & Group Pressure

o **Conformity:** Adjusting behavior and/or thinking to that of a group standard

o **Reasons for Conformity:**

1. **Normative Social Influence:** influence resulting from a person's desire to gain approval from the group. Following unwritten rules (**norms**) for expected behavior
2. **Informational Social Influence:** influence resulting from one's willingness to accept others' opinions (majority rule)

o **Asch Study on Conformity:** (Solomon Asch, 1955)

- o Subject asked to give an answer after others had done so
- o Subject would give wrong answer if everyone else gave wrong answer.





Conditions which Strengthen Conformity



- o If one is made to feel insecure or incompetent
- o There are three or more in a group
- o The group is unanimous in their decision/action
- o One admires the group's status or attractiveness
- o One has made no prior commitment or any response
- o One's behavior is being observed by others in the group



- o One's culture highly values respect for social standards (ex. China & North Korea)

DANGER



CONFORMITY HAZARD

CONTAINS POSSIBLY NEW INFORMATION
WHICH MAY STIMULATE INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

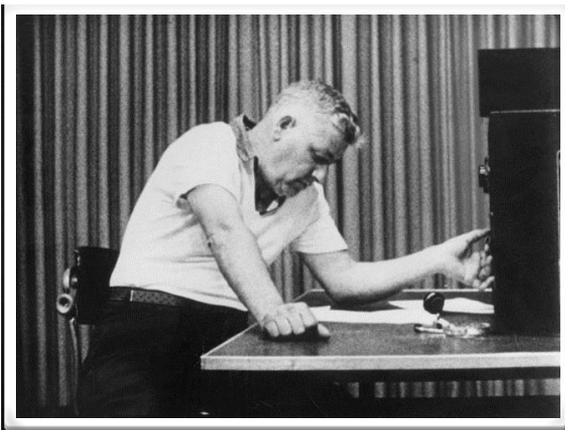
Factors That Limit Conformity

- Fewer than three in the group
- One other person gives dissent (disagrees)
- Being from a society that values non-conformity



Obedience

- **Definition:** a change in attitude or behavior brought about by social pressure to comply with people perceived to be in authority
- **Reasons for obedience:**
 - Taught as a child to obey authority figures
 - Taught since childhood to follow rules & norms
- People will often obey irrational commands from those they perceive to be in authority
- **The Milgram Experiment** 
 - Stanley Milgram (1963)
 - A "teacher" (the subject) gave increasingly severe electrical shocks to a "learner" (confederate) under the orders of the researcher
 - When the "teacher" hesitated, the researcher ordered him to continue
 - 65% gave full range of electrical shock (450 volts) despite experiencing extreme stress to continue





Group Influence, Part 1

o **Social Facilitation:**

- o Individuals respond more strongly when in the presence of others
- o Norman Triplett: Cyclists went faster when competing w/ each other than with a clock

o **Social Inhibition:**

- o Individuals respond less strongly (well) when in the presence of others.
- o Whether social facilitation or inhibition occurs depends on the person, the task, and the audience



Group Influence, Part 2

o **Social Loafing:**

- o Tendency for people in a group to exert less effort when working in a group
- o Reasons for Social Loafing:
 - o As part of a group, people feel less responsible for own actions
 - o Feel as if their contribution is not essential to success

o **Deindividuation:**

- o Loss of self-awareness and self-restraint that occurs in group situations that foster anonymity and stimulation/arousal
- o People will behave in ways they normally wouldn't if they feel they will not be identified or held responsible



Just Survive Somehow A Social Psychology Activity

- o **Objective:** put as many pieces of the puzzle together in 7 minutes as you can
- o **How to Win:** the team that has the largest (# of puzzle pieces) contiguous piece of the puzzle assembled receives the prize.
- o **Prize:** An automatic 100% on today's quiz
- o **Rules:**
 1. Most contiguously connected pieces wins
 2. No physical violence (no pushing, shoving, hitting, etc.)
 3. No damaging Ms. Buck's puzzles or puzzle boxes



Just Survive Somehow A Social Psychology Activity Debrief

- ◊ Social Norming
- ◊ In-Group Bias
- ◊ Out-Group Bias
- ◊ Social Loafing
- ◊ Self-Handicapping
- ◊ Obedience
- ◊ Cognitive Dissonance
- ◊ Aggression
- ◊ Deindividuation
- ◊ Fundamental Attribution Error
- ◊ Superordinate Goal
- ◊ Social Trap
- ◊ Frustration Aggression
- ◊ Reciprocal Determinism



Effects of Group Interaction

- ◊ **Group Polarization:** tendency of a group to become more extreme in their beliefs through discussion
 - ◊ If a group has similar beliefs, those beliefs become stronger through increased interaction & discussions
 - ◊ Ex. The rapid radicalization of ISIS
- ◊ **Groupthink:** occurs when a group desires harmony over common sense or realistic expectations
 - ◊ To preserve good feelings in a group, dissenting views are suppressed or censored
 - ◊ Ex. Cuban Missile Crises, Iraq's Weapon's of Mass Destruction
 - ◊ Groupthink can be limited if criticism is sought from outside the group, assigns people to offer differing options, having a more diverse group



Prejudice & Discrimination

- ◊ **Prejudice:** an unjustifiable and usually negative attitude toward a group and its members, often relying on stereotypes and negative feelings
- ◊ **Discrimination:** unjustifiable negative behavior (actions) toward a group and its members
- ◊ **Stereotype:** an over-generalized and often negative belief about a group of people
- ◊ **Prejudice is an ATTITUDE. Discrimination is an ACTION.**



Social & Emotional Roots of Prejudice

Root Cause	Explanation & Examples
Social Inequalities	
Us vs. Them Mentality	
Emotions (Fear & Anger)	
Scapegoat Theory	



Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

Root Cause	Explanation & Examples
Categorization	
Vivid Cases	
Just-World Phenomenon	
