

# Unit XIV

## Social Psychology

### Modules

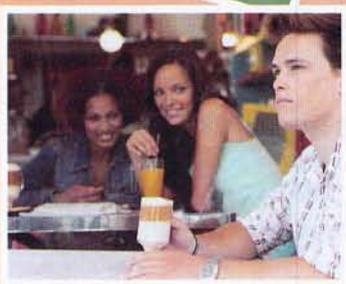
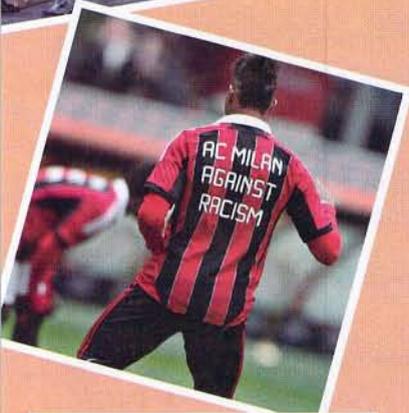
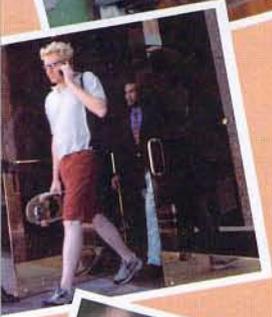
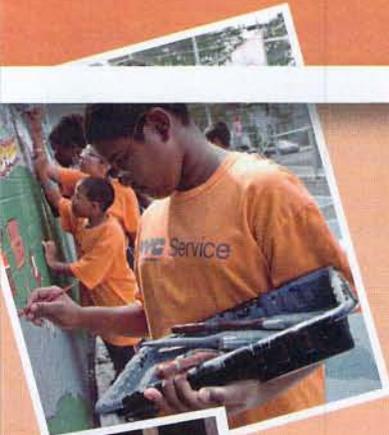
- 74 Attribution, Attitudes, and Actions
- 75 Conformity and Obedience
- 76 Group Behavior
- 77 Prejudice and Discrimination
- 78 Aggression
- 79 Attraction
- 80 Altruism, Conflict, and Peacemaking

**D**irk Willems faced a moment of decision in 1569. Threatened with torture and death as a member of a persecuted religious minority, he escaped from his Asperen, Holland, prison and fled across an ice-covered pond. His stronger and heavier jailer pursued him but fell through the ice and, unable to climb out, pled for help.

With his freedom in front of him, Willems acted with ultimate selflessness. He turned back and rescued his pursuer, who, under orders, took him back to captivity. A few weeks later Willems was condemned to be “executed with fire, until death ensues.” For his martyrdom, present-day Asperen has named a street in honor of its folk hero (Toews, 2004).

What drives people to feel contempt for religious minorities such as Dirk Willems, and to act so spitefully? And what motivated the selflessness of Willems’ response, and of so many who have died trying to save others? Indeed, what motivates any of us when we volunteer kindness and generosity toward others?

As such examples demonstrate, we are social animals. We may assume the best or the worst in others. We may approach them with closed fists or open arms. But as the novelist Herman Melville remarked, “We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads.” *Social psychologists* explore these connections by scientifically studying how we *think about*, *influence*, and *relate* to one another.



# Module 74

## Attribution, Attitudes, and Actions

### Module Learning Objectives

**74-1** Identify what social psychologists study, and discuss how we tend to explain others' behavior and our own.

**74-2** Explain whether what we think affects what we do, and whether what we do affects what we think.



**74-1** What do social psychologists study? How do we tend to explain others' behavior and our own?

Personality psychologists (Unit X) focus on the person. They study the personal traits and dynamics that explain why *different people* may act differently *in a given situation*, such as the one Willems faced. (Would you have helped the jailer out of the icy water?) **Social psychologists** focus on the situation. They study the social influences that explain why *the same person* will act differently in *different situations*. Might the jailer have acted differently—opting not to march Willems back to jail—under differing circumstances?

**social psychology** the scientific study of how we think about, influence, and relate to one another.

**attribution theory** the theory that we explain someone's behavior by crediting either the situation or the person's disposition.

**fundamental attribution error** the tendency for observers, when analyzing others' behavior, to underestimate the impact of the situation and to overestimate the impact of personal disposition.

### The Fundamental Attribution Error

Our social behavior arises from our social cognition. Especially when the unexpected occurs, we want to understand and explain why people act as they do. After studying how people explain others' behavior, Fritz Heider (1958) proposed an **attribution theory**: We can attribute the behavior to the person's stable, enduring traits (a *dispositional attribution*). Or we can attribute it to the situation (a *situational attribution*).

For example, in class, we notice that Juliette seldom talks. At the game, Jack talks nonstop. That must be the sort of people they are, we decide. Juliette must be shy and Jack outgoing. Such attributions—to their dispositions—can be valid, because people do have enduring personality traits. But sometimes we fall prey to the **fundamental attribution error** (Ross, 1977): We overestimate the influence of personality and underestimate the influence of situations. In class, Jack may be as quiet as Juliette. Catch Juliette as the lead in the high school musical and you may hardly recognize your quiet classmate.

David Napolitan and George Goethals (1979) demonstrated the fundamental attribution error in an experiment with Williams College students. They had students talk, one at a time, with a young woman who acted either cold and critical or warm and friendly. Before the talks, the researchers told half the students that the woman's behavior would be spontaneous. They told the other half the truth—that they had instructed her to *act* friendly (or unfriendly).

Did hearing the truth affect students' impressions of the woman? Not at all! If the woman acted friendly, both groups decided she really was a warm person. If



she acted unfriendly, both decided she really was a cold person. They attributed her behavior to her personal disposition *even when told that her behavior was situational*—that she was merely acting that way for the purposes of the experiment.

The fundamental attribution error appears more often in some cultures than in others. Individualist Westerners more often attribute behavior to people's personal traits. People in East Asian cultures are somewhat more sensitive to the power of the situation (Heine & Ruby, 2010; Kitayama et al., 2009). This difference has appeared in experiments that asked people to view scenes, such as a big fish swimming. Americans focused more on the individual fish, and Japanese people more on the whole scene (Chua et al., 2005; Nisbett, 2003).

We all commit the fundamental attribution error. Consider: Is your AP® psychology teacher shy or outgoing? If you answer "outgoing," remember that you know your teacher from one situation—the classroom, which demands outgoing behavior. Your teacher (who observes his or her own behavior not only in the classroom, but also with family, in meetings, when traveling) might say, "Me, outgoing? It all depends on the situation. In class or with good friends, yes, I'm outgoing. But at professional meetings, I'm really rather shy." Outside their assigned roles, teachers seem less teacherly, presidents less presidential, lawyers less legalistic.

When we explain *our own* behavior, we are sensitive to how our behavior changes with the situation (Idson & Mischel, 2001). After behaving badly, for example, we recognize how the situation affected our actions (recall the *self-serving bias* discussed in Module 59). What about our own intentional and admirable actions? Those we attribute not to situations but to our own good reasons (Malle, 2006; Malle et al., 2007). We also are sensitive to the power of the situation when we explain the behavior of people we know well and have seen in different contexts. We are most likely to commit the fundamental attribution error when a stranger acts badly. Having only seen that red-faced fan screaming at the referee in the heat of competition, we may assume he is a bad person. But outside the stadium, he may be a good neighbor and a great parent.

Researchers have reversed the perspectives of actor and observer. They filmed two people interacting, with a camera behind each person. Then they showed each person a replay—filmed from the other person's perspective. This reversed their attributions of the behaviors (Lassiter & Irvine, 1986; Storms, 1973). Seeing things from the actor's perspective, the observers better appreciated the situation. (As we act, our eyes look outward; we see others' faces, not our own.) Taking the observer's point of view, the actors became more aware of their own personal style.

Reflecting on our past selves of 5 or 10 years ago also switches our perspective. Our present self adopts the observer's perspective and attributes our past behavior mostly to our traits (Pronin & Ross, 2006). In another 5 or 10 years, your today's self may seem like another person.

The way we explain others' actions, attributing them to the person or the situation, can have important real-life effects (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993; Fletcher et al., 1990). A person must decide whether to interpret another's friendliness as genuine, or motivated by self-interest (she just needs a ride). A jury must decide whether a shooting was malicious or in self-defense. A voter must decide whether a candidate's promises will be kept or forgotten. A partner must decide whether a loved one's tart-tongued remark reflects a bad day or a mean disposition.

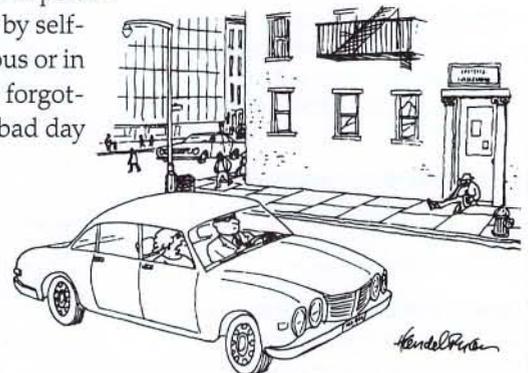
Finally, consider the social and economic effects of attribution. How do we explain poverty or unemployment? In Britain, India, Australia, and the United States political conservatives tend to place the blame on the personal dispositions of the poor and unemployed: "People generally get what they deserve. Those who don't work are freeloaders. Those who take initiative can still get ahead" (Furnham, 1982; Pandey et al., 1982; Wagstaff, 1982; Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Political liberals (and social scientists) are more likely to blame past and present situations: "If you or I

### AP® Exam Tip

Many students have not heard of the fundamental attribution error before taking a course in psychology. This concept often shows up on the AP® exam, so be sure you understand this well.

### FYI

Some 7 in 10 college women report having experienced a man misattributing her friendliness as a sexual come-on (Jacques-Tiura et al., 2007).



"Otis, shout at that man to pull himself together."

**An attribution question** Whether we attribute poverty and homelessness to social circumstances or to personal dispositions affects and reflects our political views.



Lee Snider/The Image Works

had to live with the same poor education, lack of opportunity, and discrimination, would we be any better off?" To understand and prevent terrorism, they say, consider the situations that breed terrorists. Better to drain the swamps than swat the mosquitoes.

*The point to remember:* Our attributions—to a person's disposition or to the situation—have real consequences.

## Attitudes and Actions

74-2

Does what we think affect what we do, or does what we do affect what we think?

**Attitudes** are feelings, often influenced by our beliefs, that predispose our reactions to objects, people, and events. If we *believe* someone is threatening us, we may *feel* fear and anger toward the person and *act* defensively. The traffic between our attitudes and our actions is two-way. Our attitudes affect our actions. And our actions affect our attitudes.

### Attitudes Affect Actions

Consider the climate-change debate. On one side are climate-change activists: "Almost all climate scientists are of one mind about the threat of global warming," reports *Science* magazine (Kerr, 2009). "It's real, it's dangerous, and the world needs to take action immediately." On the other side are climate-change deniers: The number of Americans who told Gallup pollsters that global warming is "generally exaggerated" increased from 30 percent in 2006 to 48 percent in 2010, and then dropped to 42 percent in 2012 (Saad, 2013).

Knowing that public attitudes affect public policies, activists on both sides are aiming to persuade. Persuasion efforts generally take two forms:

- **Peripheral route persuasion** doesn't engage systematic thinking, but does produce fast results as people respond to incidental cues (such as endorsements by respected people) and make snap judgments. A perfume ad may lure us with images of beautiful or famous people in love.
- **Central route persuasion** offers evidence and arguments that aim to trigger favorable thoughts. It occurs mostly when people are naturally analytical or involved in the issue. Environmental advocates may show us evidence of rising temperatures, melting glaciers, rising seas, and northward shifts in vegetation and animal life. Because it is more thoughtful and less superficial, it is more durable and more likely to influence behavior.

Those who attempt to persuade us are trying to influence our behavior by changing our attitudes. But other factors, including the situation, also influence behavior. Strong social pressures, for example, can weaken the attitude-behavior connection (Wallace et al., 2005).

**attitude** feelings, often influenced by our beliefs, that predispose us to respond in a particular way to objects, people, and events.

**peripheral route persuasion** occurs when people are influenced by incidental cues, such as a speaker's attractiveness.

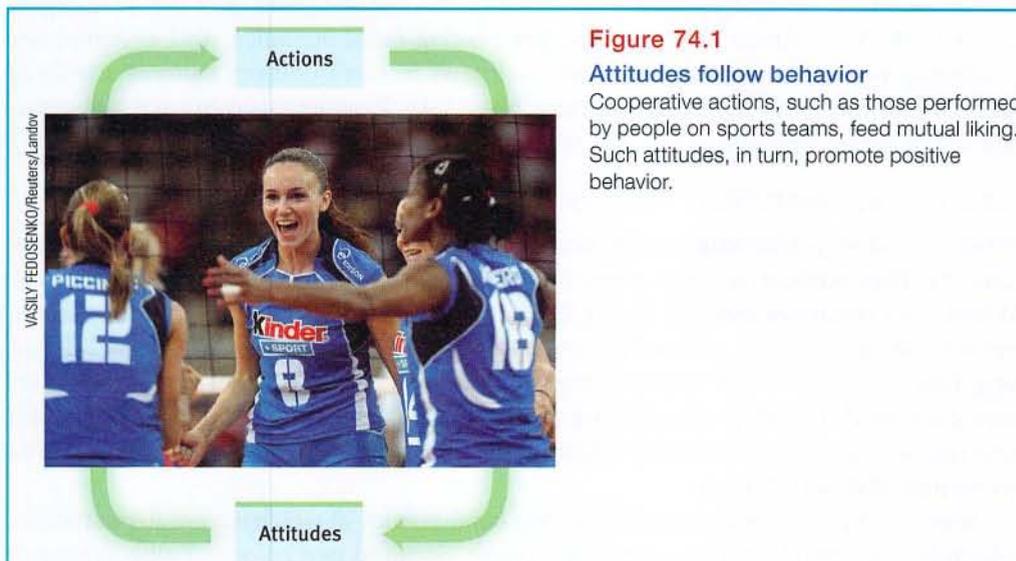
**central route persuasion** occurs when interested people focus on the arguments and respond with favorable thoughts.

In roll-call votes, politicians will sometimes vote what their supporters demand, despite privately disagreeing with those demands (Nagourney, 2002). In such cases, external pressure overrides the attitude-behavior link.

Attitudes are especially likely to affect behavior when external influences are minimal, and when the attitude is stable, specific to the behavior, and easily recalled (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). One experiment used vivid, easily recalled information to persuade people that sustained tanning put them at risk for future skin cancer. One month later, 72 percent of the participants, and only 16 percent of those in a waitlist control group, had lighter skin (McClendon & Prentice-Dunn, 2001). Persuasion changed attitudes, which changed behavior.

## Actions Affect Attitudes

Now consider a more surprising principle: Not only will people stand up for what they believe, they also will believe more strongly in what they have stood up for. Many streams of evidence confirm that *attitudes follow behavior* (**FIGURE 74.1**).



**Figure 74.1**

### Attitudes follow behavior

Cooperative actions, such as those performed by people on sports teams, feed mutual liking. Such attitudes, in turn, promote positive behavior.

## THE FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR PHENOMENON

How would you react if someone induced you to act against your beliefs? In many cases, people adjust their attitudes. During the Korean war, many U.S. prisoners of war were held in war camps run by Chinese communists. Without using brutality, the captors secured the prisoners' collaboration in various activities. Some merely ran errands or accepted favors. Others made radio appeals and false confessions. Still others informed on other prisoners and divulged military information. When the war ended, 21 prisoners chose to stay with the communists. More returned home "brainwashed"—convinced that communism was a good thing for Asia.

How did the Chinese captors achieve these amazing results? A key ingredient was their effective use of the **foot-in-the-door phenomenon**: They knew that people who agreed to a small request would find it easier to comply later with a larger one. The Chinese began with harmless requests, such as copying a trivial statement, but gradually escalated their demands (Schein, 1956). The next statement to be copied might list flaws of capitalism. Then, to gain privileges, the prisoners participated in group discussions, wrote self-criticisms, or uttered public confessions. After doing so, they often adjusted their beliefs to be more consistent with their public acts. The point is simple: To get people to agree to something big, start small and build (Cialdini, 1993). A trivial act makes the next act easier. Succumb to a temptation, and you will find the next temptation harder to resist.

### foot-in-the-door phenomenon

the tendency for people who have first agreed to a small request to comply later with a larger request.

In dozens of experiments, researchers have coaxed people into acting against their attitudes or violating their moral standards, with the same result: Doing becomes believing. After giving in to a request to harm an innocent victim—by making nasty comments or delivering electric shocks—people begin to disparage their victim. After speaking or writing on behalf of a position they have qualms about, they begin to believe their own words.

Fortunately, the attitudes-follow-behavior principle works with good deeds as well. The foot-in-the-door tactic has helped boost charitable contributions, blood donations, and product sales. In one classic experiment, researchers posing as safe-driving volunteers asked Californians to permit the installation of a large, poorly lettered “Drive Carefully” sign in their front yards. Only 17 percent consented. They approached other home owners with a small request first: Would they display a 3-inch-high “Be a Safe Driver” sign? Nearly all readily agreed. When reapproached two weeks later to allow the large, ugly sign in their front yards, 76 percent consented (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). To secure a big commitment, it often pays to put your foot in the door: Start small and build.

Racial attitudes likewise follow behavior. In the years immediately following the introduction of school desegregation in the United States and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, White Americans expressed diminishing racial prejudice. And as Americans in different regions came to act more alike—thanks to more uniform national standards against discrimination—they began to think more alike. Experiments confirm the observation: Moral action strengthens moral convictions.

### ROLE PLAYING AFFECTS ATTITUDES

When you adopt a new **role**—when you leave middle school and start high school, become a college student, or begin a new job—you strive to follow the social prescriptions. At first, your behaviors may feel phony, because you are *acting* a role. Soldiers may at first feel they are playing war games. Newlyweds may feel they are “playing house.” Before long, however, what began as playacting in the theater of life becomes you. Researchers have confirmed this effect by assessing people’s attitudes before and after they adopt a new role, sometimes in laboratory situations, sometimes in everyday situations, such as before and after taking a job.

Role playing morphed into real life in one famous study in which male college students volunteered to spend time in a simulated prison. Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo (1972) randomly assigned some volunteers to be guards. He gave them uniforms, clubs, and whistles and instructed them to enforce certain rules. Others became prisoners, locked in barren cells and forced to wear humiliating outfits. For a day or two, the volunteers self-consciously “played” their roles. Then the simulation became real—too real. Most guards developed disparaging attitudes, and some devised cruel and degrading routines. One by one, the prisoners broke down, rebelled, or became passively resigned. After only six days, Zimbardo called off the study.

“Fake it until you make it.”  
-ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SAYING

**role** a set of expectations (norms) about a social position, defining how those in the position ought to behave.

**The power of the situation** In his 1972 Stanford Prison simulation, Philip Zimbardo created a toxic situation (left). Those assigned to the guard role soon degraded the prisoners. In real life in 2004, some U.S. military guards tormented Iraqi prisoners at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison (right). To Zimbardo (2004, 2007), it was a bad barrel rather than a few bad apples that led to the Abu Ghraib atrocities: “When ordinary people are put in a novel, evil place, such as most prisons, Situations Win, People Lose.”



Philip G. Zimbardo, Inc.



AP Photo

Role playing can train torturers (Staub, 1989). In the early 1970s, the Greek military government eased men into their roles. First, a trainee stood guard outside an interrogation cell. After this “foot in the door” step, he stood guard inside. Only then was he ready to become actively involved in the questioning and torture. What we do, we gradually become.

Yet people differ. In Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison simulation and in other atrocity-producing situations, some people have succumbed to the situation and others have not (Carnahan & McFarland, 2007; Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Mastroianni & Reed, 2006; Zimbardo, 2007). Person and situation interact. Much as water dissolves salt but not sand, so toxic situations corrupt some people but not others (Johnson, 2007).

### COGNITIVE DISSONANCE: RELIEF FROM TENSION

So far we have seen that actions can affect attitudes, sometimes turning prisoners into collaborators, doubters into believers, and compliant guards into abusers. But why? One explanation is that when we become aware that our attitudes and actions don’t coincide, we experience tension, or *cognitive dissonance*. To relieve such tension, according to Leon Festinger’s (1957) **cognitive dissonance theory**, we often bring our attitudes into line with our actions.

Dozens of experiments have explored this cognitive dissonance phenomenon. Many have made people feel responsible for behavior that clashed with their attitudes and had foreseeable consequences. In one of these experiments, you might agree for a measly \$2 to help a researcher by writing an essay that supports something you don’t believe in (perhaps a school vending machine tax). Feeling responsible for the statements (which are inconsistent with your attitudes), you would probably feel dissonance, especially if you thought an administrator would be reading your essay. To reduce the uncomfortable tension you might start believing your phony words. At such times, it’s as if we rationalize, “If I chose to do it (or say it), I must believe in it.” The less coerced and more responsible we feel for a troubling act, the more dissonance we feel. The more dissonance we feel, the more motivated we are to find consistency, such as changing our attitudes to help justify the act.

The pressure to reduce dissonance helps explain the evolution of American attitudes toward the U.S. invasion of Iraq. When the war began, the stated reason for the invasion was the presumed threat of Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Would the war be justified if Iraq did not have WMD? Only 38 percent of Americans surveyed said it would be (Gallup, 2003). Nearly 80 percent believed such weapons would be found (Duffy, 2003; Newport et al., 2003). When no WMD were found, many Americans felt dissonance, which was heightened by their awareness of the war’s financial and human costs, by scenes of chaos in Iraq, and by inflamed anti-American and pro-terrorist sentiments in some parts of the world.

To reduce dissonance, some people revised their memories of the war’s rationale. The invasion then became a movement to liberate an oppressed people and promote democracy in the Middle East. Before long, 58 percent of Americans—a majority—said they supported the war even if no WMD were found (Gallup, 2003).

The attitudes-follow-behavior principle has a heartening implication: We cannot directly control all our feelings, but we can influence them by altering our behavior. (Recall from Module 42 the emotional effects of facial expressions and of body postures.) If we are down in the dumps, we can do as cognitive-behavioral therapists advise and talk in more positive, self-accepting ways with fewer self-put-downs. If we are unloving, we can become more loving by behaving as if we were so—by doing thoughtful things, expressing affection, giving affirmation. That helps explain why teens’ doing volunteer work promotes a compassionate identity. “Assume a virtue, if you have it not,” says Hamlet to his mother. “For use can almost change the stamp of nature.” Pretense can become reality. Conduct sculpts character. What we do we become.

*The point to remember:* Cruel acts shape the self. But so do acts of good will. Act as though you like someone, and you soon may. Changing our behavior can change how we think about others and how we feel about ourselves.

Regarding U.S. President Lyndon Johnson’s commitment to the Vietnam war: “A president who justifies his actions only to the public might be induced to change them. A president who has justified his actions to himself, believing that he has the truth, becomes impervious to self-correction.” -CAROL TAVRIS AND ELLIOT ARONSON, *MISTAKES WERE MADE (BUT NOT BY ME)*, 2007

**cognitive dissonance theory**  
the theory that we act to reduce the discomfort (dissonance) we feel when two of our thoughts (cognitions) are inconsistent. For example, when we become aware that our attitudes and our actions clash, we can reduce the resulting dissonance by changing our attitudes.

“Sit all day in a moping posture, sigh, and reply to everything with a dismal voice, and your melancholy lingers. . . . If we wish to conquer undesirable emotional tendencies in ourselves, we must . . . go through the outward movements of those contrary dispositions which we prefer to cultivate.” -WILLIAM JAMES, *PRINCIPLES OF PSYCHOLOGY*, 1890

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

Do you have an attitude or tendency you would like to change? Using the attitudes-follow-behavior principle, how might you go about changing that attitude?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

Driving to school one snowy day, Marco narrowly misses a car that slides through a red light. "Slow down! What a terrible driver," he thinks to himself. Moments later, Marco himself slips through an intersection and yelps, "Wow! These roads are awful. The city plows need to get out here." What social psychology principle has Marco just demonstrated? Explain.

*Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.*

## Module 74 Review

**74-1**

What do social psychologists study? How do we tend to explain others' behavior and our own?

- *Social psychologists* focus on how we think about, influence, and relate to one another. They study the social influences that explain why the same person will act differently in different situations.
- When explaining others' behavior, we may commit the *fundamental attribution error* (underestimating the influence of the situation and overestimating the effects of personality). When explaining our own behavior, we more readily attribute it to the influence of the situation.

**74-2**

Does what we think affect what we do, or does what we do affect what we think?

- *Attitudes* are feelings, often influenced by our beliefs, that predispose us to respond in certain ways.
- *Peripheral route persuasion* uses incidental cues (such as celebrity endorsement) to try to produce fast but relatively thoughtless changes in attitudes.
- *Central route persuasion* offers evidence and arguments to trigger thoughtful responses.
- When other influences are minimal, attitudes that are stable, specific, and easily recalled can affect our actions.
- Actions can modify attitudes, as in the *foot-in-the-door phenomenon* (complying with a large request after having agreed to a small request) and role playing (acting a social part by following guidelines for expected behavior).
- When our attitudes don't fit with our actions, *cognitive dissonance theory* suggests that we will reduce tension by changing our attitudes to match our actions.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. What do we call the tendency for observers to underestimate the impact of the situation and overestimate the impact of personal disposition?
  - a. Peripheral route persuasion
  - b. Social psychology
  - c. Attribution theory
  - d. Fundamental attribution error
  - e. Central route persuasion
2. Which of the following best describes a feeling, often influenced by a belief, that predisposes one to respond in a particular way to people and events?
  - a. Central route persuasion
  - b. Anger
  - c. Emotion
  - d. Foot-in-the-door phenomenon
  - e. Attitude
3. Which of the following best explains why we act to reduce the discomfort we feel when two of our thoughts are inconsistent?
  - a. Cognitive dissonance theory
  - b. Power of the situation
  - c. Foot-in-the-door phenomenon
  - d. Role theory
  - e. Fundamental attribution error

## Practice FRQs

1. Explain the fundamental attribution error.

### Answer

**1 point:** The fundamental attribution error occurs when we are analyzing someone's behavior.

**2 points:** In order for the fundamental attribution error to occur, the person analyzing must underestimate the role of the situation and overestimate the disposition of the person whose behavior is being analyzed.

2. Explain the difference between peripheral route persuasion and central route persuasion.

**(4 points)**

# Module 75

## Conformity and Obedience

### Module Learning Objectives

- 75-1** Describe automatic mimicry, and explain how conformity experiments reveal the power of social influence.
- 75-2** Describe what we learned about the power of social influence from Milgram's obedience experiments.



"Have you ever noticed how one example—good or bad—can prompt others to follow? How one illegally parked car can give permission for others to do likewise? How one racial joke can fuel another?" —MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, *THE MEASURE OF OUR SUCCESS*, 1992

Social psychology's great lesson is the enormous power of social influence. This influence can be seen in our conformity, our obedience to authority, and our group behavior. Suicides, bomb threats, airplane hijackings, and UFO sightings all have a curious tendency to come in clusters. On most high school campuses, jeans are the dress code; on New York's Wall Street or London's Bond Street, dress suits are the norm. When we know how to act, how to groom, how to talk, life functions smoothly. Armed with social influence principles, advertisers, fundraisers, and campaign workers aim to sway our decisions to buy, to donate, to vote. Isolated with others who share their grievances, dissenters may gradually become rebels, and rebels may become terrorists. Let's examine the pull of these social strings. How strong are they? How do they operate? When do we break them?

### Conformity: Complying With Social Pressures

- 75-1** What is automatic mimicry, and how do conformity experiments reveal the power of social influence?

**Conforming to nonconformity**  
Are these students asserting their individuality or identifying themselves with others of the same microculture?



### Automatic Mimicry

Fish swim in schools. Birds fly in flocks. And humans, too, tend to go with their group, to think what it thinks and do what it does. Behavior is contagious. Chimpanzees are more likely to yawn after observing another chimpanzee yawn (Anderson et al., 2004). Ditto for humans. If one of us yawns, laughs, coughs, stares at the sky, or checks a cell phone, others in our group will soon do the same. Like the chameleon lizards that take on the color of their surroundings, we humans take on the emotional tones of those around us. Just hearing someone reading a neutral text in either a happy- or sad-sounding voice creates "mood contagion" in listeners (Neumann & Strack, 2000). We are natural mimics, unconsciously imitating others' expressions, postures, and voice tones.

Tanya Chartrand and John Bargh captured this mimicry, which they call the *chameleon effect* (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). They had students work in a room alongside another person, who was actually a confederate working for the experimenters. Sometimes the confederates rubbed their own face. Sometimes they shook their foot. Sure enough, the students tended to rub their face when with the face-rubbing person and shake their foot when with the foot-shaking person. Other studies have found people synchronizing their grammar to match material they are reading or people they are hearing (Ireland & Pennebaker, 2010). Perhaps we should not be surprised then that intricate studies show that obesity, sleep loss, drug use, loneliness, and happiness spread through social networks (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). We and our friends form a social system.

Automatic mimicry helps us to *empathize*—to feel what others are feeling. This helps explain why we feel happier around happy people than around depressed people. It also helps explain why studies of groups of British nurses and accountants have revealed *mood linkage*—sharing up and down moods (Totterdell et al., 1998). Empathic people yawn more after seeing others yawn (Morrison, 2007). And empathic mimicking fosters fondness (van Baaren et al., 2003, 2004). Perhaps you've noticed that when someone nods their head as you do and echoes your words, you feel a certain rapport and liking?

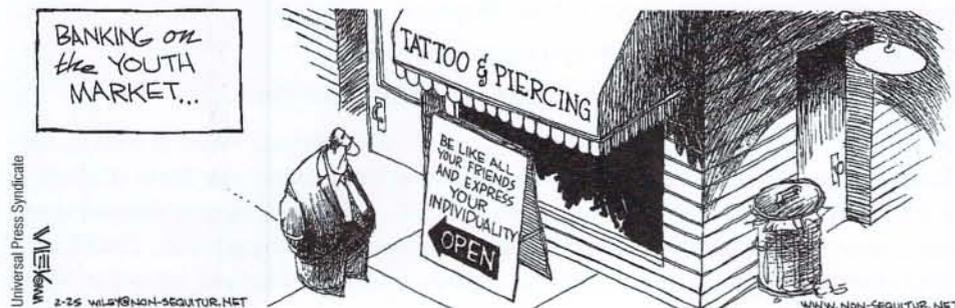
Suggestibility and mimicry sometimes lead to tragedy. In the eight days following the 1999 shooting rampage at Colorado's Columbine High School, every U.S. state except Vermont experienced threats of copycat violence. Pennsylvania alone recorded 60 such threats (Cooper, 1999). Sociologist David Phillips and his colleagues (1985, 1989) found that suicides, too, sometimes increase following a highly publicized suicide. In the wake of screen idol Marilyn Monroe's suicide on August 5, 1962, for example, the number of suicides in the United States exceeded the usual August count by 200.

What causes behavior clusters? Do people act similarly because of their influence on one another? Or because they are simultaneously exposed to the same events and conditions? Seeking answers to such questions, social psychologists have conducted experiments on group pressure and conformity.

"When I see synchrony and mimicry—whether it concerns yawning, laughing, dancing, or aping—I see social connection and bonding." -PRIMATOLOGIST FRANS DE WAAL "THE EMPATHY INSTINCT," 2009

## NON SEQUITUR

by WILEY



## Conformity and Social Norms

Suggestibility and mimicry are subtle types of **conformity**—adjusting our behavior or thinking toward some group standard. To study conformity, Solomon Asch (1955) devised a simple test. As a participant in what you believe is a study of visual perception, you arrive in time to take a seat at a table with five other people. The experimenter asks the group to state, one by one, which of three comparison lines is identical to a standard line. You see clearly that the answer is Line 2, and you await your turn to say so. Your boredom begins to show when the next set of lines proves equally easy.

Now comes the third trial, and the correct answer seems just as clear-cut (**FIGURE 75.1** on the next page). But the first person gives what strikes you as a wrong answer: "Line 3." When the second person and then the third and fourth give the same wrong

**conformity** adjusting our behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard.



William Vandivert/Scientific American

**Figure 75.1****Asch's conformity experiments**

Which of the three comparison lines is equal to the standard line? What do you suppose most people would say after hearing five others say, "Line 3"? In this photo from one of Asch's experiments, the student in the center shows the severe discomfort that comes from disagreeing with the responses of other group members (in this case, accomplices of the experimenter).

answer, you sit up straight and squint. When the fifth person agrees with the first four, you feel your heart begin to pound. The experimenter then looks to you for your answer. Torn between the unanimity voiced by the five others and the evidence of your own eyes, you feel tense and suddenly unsure. You hesitate before answering, wondering whether you should suffer the discomfort of being the oddball. What answer do you give?

In Asch's experiments, college students, answering questions alone, erred less than 1 percent of the time. But what about when several others—confederates working for the experimenter—answered incorrectly? Although most people told the truth even when others did not, Asch was disturbed by his result: More than one-third of the time, these "intelligent and well-meaning" college students were then "willing to call white black" by going along with the group.

Later investigations have not always found as much conformity as Asch found, but they have revealed that we are more likely to conform when we

- are made to feel incompetent or insecure.
- are in a group with at least three people.
- are in a group in which everyone else agrees. (If just one other person disagrees, the odds of our disagreeing greatly increase.)
- admire the group's status and attractiveness.
- have not made a prior commitment to any response.
- know that others in the group will observe our behavior.
- are from a culture that strongly encourages respect for social standards.

Why do we so often think what others think and do what they do? Why in college residence halls do students' attitudes become more similar to those living near them (Cullum & Harton, 2007)? Why in college classrooms are hand-raised answers to controversial questions less diverse than anonymous electronic clicker responses (Stowell et al., 2010)? Why do we clap when others clap, eat as others eat, believe what others believe, say what others say, even see what others see?

Frequently, we conform to avoid rejection or to gain social approval. In such cases, we are responding to **normative social influence**. We are sensitive to *social norms*—understood rules for accepted and expected behavior—because the price we pay for being different can be severe. We need to belong. To get along, we go along.

At other times, we conform because we want to be accurate. Groups provide information, and only an uncommonly stubborn person will never listen to others. "Those who never retract their opinions love themselves more than they love truth," observed Joseph Joubert, an eighteenth-century French essayist. When we accept others' opinions about reality, we are responding to **informational social influence**. As Rebecca Denton demonstrated in 2004, sometimes it pays to assume others are right and to follow their lead. Denton set a record for the furthest distance driven on the wrong side of a British divided highway—30 miles, with only one minor sideswipe, before the motorway ran out and police were able

**normative social influence**

influence resulting from a person's desire to gain approval or avoid disapproval.

**informational social influence**

influence resulting from one's willingness to accept others' opinions about reality.

to puncture her tires. Denton, who was intoxicated, later explained that she thought the hundreds of other drivers coming at her were all on the wrong side of the road (Woolcock, 2004).

Is conformity good or bad? The answer depends partly on our culturally influenced values. Western Europeans and people in most English-speaking countries tend to prize individualism. People in many Asian, African, and Latin American countries place a higher value on honoring group standards. In social influence experiments across 17 countries, conformity rates have been lower in individualist cultures (Bond & Smith, 1996). American university students, for example, tend to see themselves, in domains ranging from consumer purchases to political views, as less conforming than others (Pronin et al., 2007). We are, in our own eyes, individuals amid a crowd of sheep.



© The New Yorker Collection, 2006.  
Mike Twoby from cartoonbank.com.  
All Rights Reserved.

*"I love the little ways you're identical to everyone else."*

## Obedience: Following Orders

**75-2**

What did Milgram's obedience experiments teach us about the power of social influence?

Social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1963, 1974), a student of Solomon Asch, knew that people often give in to social pressures. But how would they respond to outright commands? To find out, he undertook what became social psychology's most famous, controversial, and influential experiments (Benjamin & Simpson, 2009).

Imagine yourself as one of the nearly 1000 people who took part in Milgram's 20 experiments. You respond to an advertisement for participants in a Yale University psychology study of the effect of punishment on learning. Professor Milgram's assistant asks you and another person to draw slips from a hat to see who will be the "teacher" and who will be the "learner." You draw the "teacher" slip and are asked to sit down in front of a machine, which has a series of labeled switches. The learner, a mild and submissive-seeming man, is led to an adjoining room and strapped into a chair. From the chair, wires run through the wall to "your" machine. You are given your task: Teach and then test the learner on a list of word pairs. If the learner gives a wrong answer, you are to flip a switch to deliver a brief electric shock. For the first wrong answer, you will flip the switch labeled "15 Volts—Slight Shock." With each succeeding error, you will move to the next higher voltage. The researcher demonstrates by flipping the first switch. Lights flash, relay switches click on, and an electric buzzing fills the air.

The experiment begins, and you deliver the shocks after the first and second wrong answers. If you continue, you hear the learner grunt when you flick the third, fourth, and fifth switches. After you activate the eighth switch ("120 Volts—Moderate Shock"), the learner cries out that the shocks are painful. After the tenth switch ("150 Volts—Strong Shock"), he begins shouting. "Get me out of here! I won't be in the experiment anymore! I refuse to go on!" You draw back, but the stern experimenter prods you: "Please continue—the experiment requires that you continue." You resist, but the experimenter insists, "It is absolutely essential that you continue," or "You have no other choice, you *must* go on."

If you obey, you hear the learner shriek in apparent agony as you continue to raise the shock level after each new error. After the 330-volt level, the learner refuses to answer and falls silent. Still, the experimenter pushes you toward the final, 450-volt switch. Ask the question, he says, and if no correct answer is given, administer the next shock level.

Would you follow the experimenter's commands to shock someone? At what level would you refuse to obey? Milgram asked that question in a survey before he started his experiments. Most people were sure they would stop playing such a sadistic-seeming role soon after the learner first indicated pain, certainly before he shrieked in agony. Forty psychiatrists agreed with that prediction when Milgram asked them. Were the predictions accurate? Not even close. When Milgram conducted the experiment with men aged 20 to 50, he was astonished. More than 60 percent complied fully—right up to the last switch.

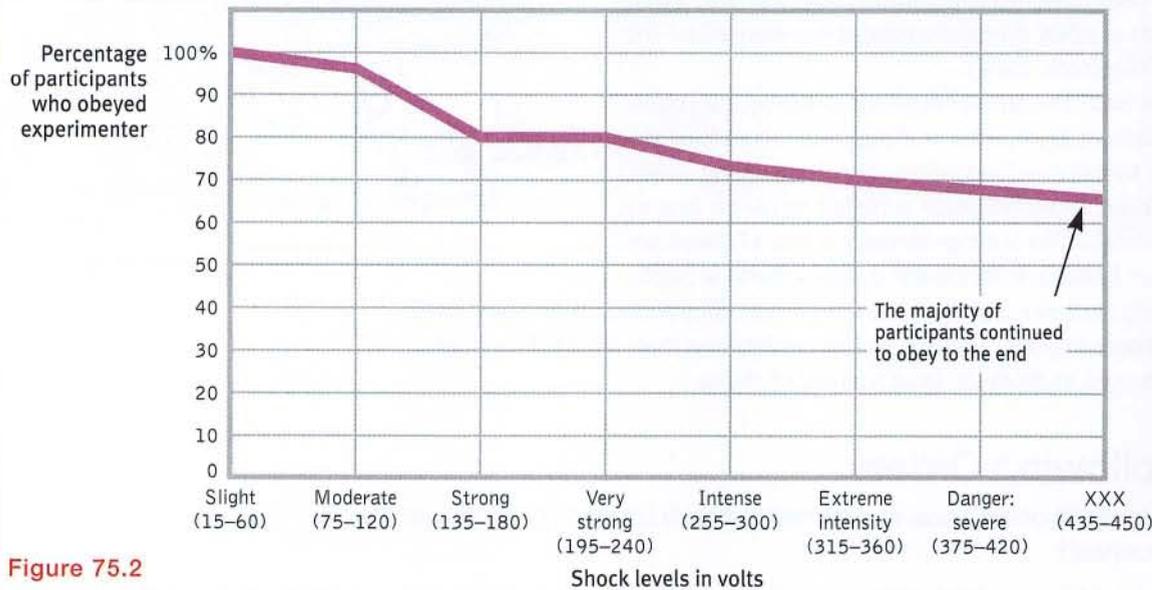
### AP® Exam Tip

Three of the most famous research projects in psychology were done by social psychologists, and you've now read about them all. Milgram, Asch, and Zimbardo (from the last module) are all likely to appear on the AP® exam.

### Stanley Milgram (1933–1984)

This social psychologist's obedience experiments "belong to the self-understanding of literate people in our age" (Sabini, 1986).





**Figure 75.2**

**Milgram's follow-up obedience experiment**

In a repeat of the earlier experiment, 65 percent of the adult male "teachers" fully obeyed the experimenter's commands to continue. They did so despite the "learner's" earlier mention of a heart condition and despite hearing cries of protest after they administered what they thought were 150 volts and agonized protests after 330 volts. (Data from Milgram, 1974.)

Even when Milgram ran a new study, with 40 new teachers, and the learner complained of a "slight heart condition," the results were similar. A full 65 percent of the new teachers obeyed every one of the experimenter's commands, right up to 450 volts (**FIGURE 75.2**).

Cultures change over time. Are people today less likely to obey an order to hurt someone? To find out, Jerry Burger (2009) replicated Milgram's basic experiment. Seventy percent of the participants obeyed up to the 150-volt point, a slight reduction from Milgram's result. And in a French reality TV show replication, 80 percent of people, egged on by a cheering audience, obeyed and tortured a screaming victim (de Moraes, 2010).

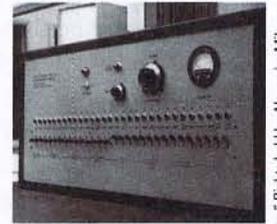
Could Milgram's findings reflect some aspect of gender behavior found only in males? *No*. In 10 later studies, women obeyed at rates similar to men's (Blass, 1999).

Did the teachers figure out the hoax—that no real shock was being delivered and the learner was in fact a confederate who was pretending to feel pain? Did they realize the experiment was really testing their willingness to comply with commands to inflict punishment? *No*. The teachers typically displayed genuine distress: They perspired, trembled, laughed nervously, and bit their lips.

Milgram's use of deception and stress triggered a debate over his research ethics. In his own defense, Milgram pointed out that, after the participants learned of the deception and actual research purposes, virtually none regretted taking part (though perhaps by then the participants had reduced their dissonance). When 40 of the teachers who had agonized most were later interviewed by a psychiatrist, none appeared to be suffering emotional aftereffects. All in all, said Milgram, the experiments provoked less enduring stress than university students experience when facing and failing big exams (Blass, 1996).

In later experiments, Milgram discovered some things that do influence people's behavior. When he varied the situation, the percentage of participants who fully obeyed ranged from 0 to 93 percent. Obedience was highest when

- *the person giving the orders was close at hand and was perceived to be a legitimate authority figure.* (Such was the case in 2005 when Temple University's basketball coach sent a 250-pound bench player, Nehemiah Ingram, into a game with instructions to commit "hard fouls." Following orders, Ingram fouled out in four minutes after breaking an opposing player's right arm.)
- *the authority figure was supported by a prestigious institution.* (Compliance was somewhat lower when Milgram dissociated his experiments from Yale University.)



- *the victim was depersonalized or at a distance, even in another room.* (Similarly, many soldiers in combat either have not fired their rifles at an enemy they can see, or have not aimed them properly. Such refusals to kill were rare among soldiers who were operating long-distance artillery or aircraft weapons [Padgett, 1989].)
- *there were no role models for defiance.* (Teachers did not see any other participant disobey the experimenter.)

The power of legitimate, close-at-hand authorities was apparent among those who followed orders to carry out the Holocaust atrocities. Obedience alone does not explain the Holocaust. Anti-Semitic ideology produced eager killers as well (Mastroianni, 2002). But obedience was a factor. In the summer of 1942, nearly 500 middle-aged German reserve police officers were dispatched to German-occupied Jozefow, Poland. On July 13, the group's visibly upset commander informed his recruits, mostly family men, of their orders. They were to round up the village's Jews, who were said to be aiding the enemy. Able-bodied men would be sent to work camps, and all the rest would be shot on the spot.

The commander gave the recruits a chance to refuse to participate in the executions. Only about a dozen immediately refused. Within 17 hours, the remaining 485 officers killed 1500 helpless women, children, and elderly, shooting them in the back of the head as they lay face down. Hearing the victims' pleas, and seeing the gruesome results, some 20 percent of the officers did eventually dissent, managing either to miss their victims or to wander away and hide until the slaughter was over (Browning, 1992). In real life, as in Milgram's experiments, those who resisted did so early, and they were the minority.

Another story was being played out in the French village of Le Chambon. There, French Jews destined for deportation to Germany were sheltered by villagers who openly defied orders to cooperate with the "New Order." The villagers' Protestant ancestors had themselves been persecuted, and their pastors taught them to "resist whenever our adversaries will demand of us obedience contrary to the orders of the Gospel" (Rochat, 1993). Ordered by police to give a list of sheltered Jews, the head pastor modeled defiance: "I don't know of Jews, I only know of human beings." Without realizing how long and terrible the war would be, or how much punishment and poverty they would suffer, the resisters made an initial commitment to resist. Supported by their beliefs, their role models, their interactions with one another, and their own initial acts, they remained defiant to the war's end.

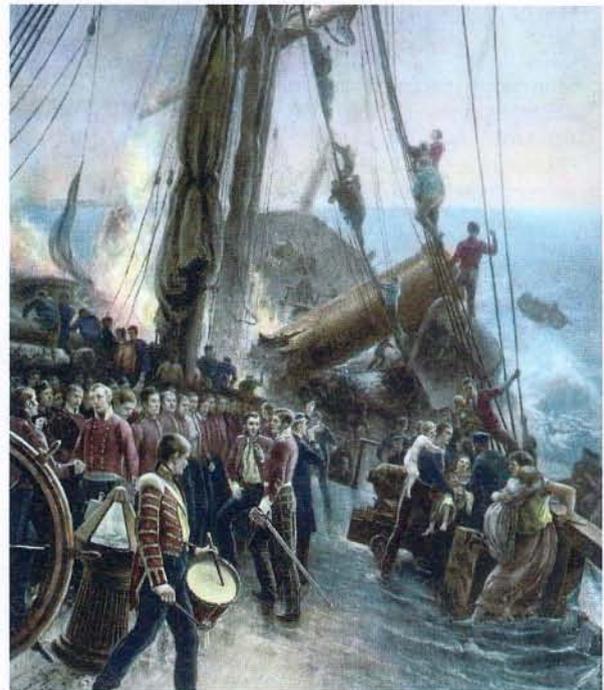
Lest we presume that obedience is always evil and resistance is always good, consider the obedience of British soldiers who, in 1852, were traveling with civilians aboard the steamship *Birkenhead*. As they neared their South African port, the *Birkenhead* became impaled on a rock. To calm the passengers and permit an orderly exit of civilians via the three available lifeboats, soldiers who were not assisting the passengers or working the pumps lined up at parade rest. "Steady, men!" said their officer as the lifeboats pulled away. Heroically, no one frantically rushed to claim a lifeboat seat. As the boat sank, all were plunged into the sea, most to be drowned or devoured by sharks. For almost a century, noted James Michener (1978), "the Birkenhead drill remained the measure by which heroic behavior at sea was measured."



Don Cravens/Contributor/Getty Images

### **The power of disobedience.**

The American civil rights movement was ignited when one African American woman, Rosa Parks, was arrested after spontaneously refusing to relinquish her Montgomery, Alabama, bus seat to a White man.



The Agony, County Armagh, Northern Ireland/The Bridgeman Art Library

**The "Birkenhead drill"** To calm and give priority to passengers, soldiers obeyed orders to line up on deck as their ship sank.

## Lessons From the Obedience Studies

What do the Milgram experiments teach us about ourselves? How does flicking a shock switch relate to everyday social behavior? Recall from Module 6 that psychological experiments aim not to re-create the literal behaviors of everyday life but to capture and explore the underlying processes that shape those behaviors. Participants in the Milgram experiments confronted a dilemma we all face frequently: Do I adhere to my own standards, or do I respond to others?

In these experiments and their modern replications, participants were torn. Should they respond to the pleas of the victim or the orders of the experimenter? Their moral sense warned them not to harm another, yet it also prompted them to obey the experimenter and to be a good research participant. With kindness and obedience on a collision course, obedience usually won.

These experiments demonstrated that strong social influences can make people conform to falsehoods or capitulate to cruelty. Milgram saw this as the fundamental lesson of this work: “Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process” (1974, p. 6).

Focusing on the end point—450 volts, or someone’s real-life reprehensible deceit or violence—we can hardly comprehend the inhumanity. But we ignore how they get there, in tiny increments. Milgram did not entrap his teachers by asking them first to zap learners with enough electricity to make their hair stand on end. Rather, he exploited the foot-in-the-door effect, beginning with a little tickle of electricity and escalating step by step. In the minds of those throwing the switches, the small action became justified, making the next act tolerable. In Jozefow and Le Chambon, as in Milgram’s experiments, those who resisted usually did so early. After the first acts of compliance or resistance, attitudes began to follow and justify behavior.

So it happens when people succumb, gradually, to evil. In any society, great evils sometimes grow out of people’s compliance with lesser evils. The Nazi leaders suspected that most German civil servants would resist shooting or gassing Jews directly, but they found them surprisingly willing to handle the paperwork of the Holocaust (Silver & Geller, 1978). Milgram found a similar reaction in his experiments. When he asked 40 men to administer the learning test while someone else did the shocking, 93 percent complied. Cruelty does not require devilish villains. All it takes is ordinary people corrupted by an evil situation. Ordinary students may follow orders to haze initiates into their group. Ordinary employees may follow orders to produce and market harmful products. Ordinary soldiers may follow orders to punish and then torture prisoners (Lankford, 2009).

“I was only following orders.”  
-ADOLF EICHMANN, DIRECTOR OF  
NAZI DEPORTATION OF JEWS TO  
CONCENTRATION CAMPS

“The normal reaction to an  
abnormal situation is abnormal  
behavior.” -JAMES WALLER,  
*BECOMING EVIL: HOW ORDINARY  
PEOPLE COMMIT GENOCIDE AND MASS  
KILLING*, 2007

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

How have you found yourself conforming, or perhaps “conforming to nonconformity”? In what ways have you seen others identifying themselves with those of the same culture or microculture?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

What types of situations have researchers found to be most likely to encourage obedience in participants?

Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.

## Module 75 Review

**75-1** What is automatic mimicry, and how do conformity experiments reveal the power of social influence?

- Automatic mimicry (the chameleon effect), our tendency to unconsciously imitate others' expressions, postures, and voice tones, is a form of *conformity*.
- Solomon Asch and others have found that we are most likely to adjust our behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard when (a) we feel incompetent or insecure, (b) our group has at least three people, (c) everyone else agrees, (d) we admire the group's status and attractiveness, (e) we have not already committed to another response, (f) we know we are being observed, and (g) our culture encourages respect for social standards.
- We may conform to gain approval (*normative social influence*) or because we are willing to accept others' opinions as new information (*informational social influence*).

**75-2** What did Milgram's obedience experiments teach us about the power of social influence?

- Stanley Milgram's experiments—in which people obeyed orders even when they thought they were harming another person—demonstrated that strong social influences can make ordinary people conform to falsehoods or give in to cruelty.
- Obedience was highest when (a) the person giving orders was nearby and was perceived as a legitimate authority figure; (b) the research was supported by a prestigious institution; (c) the victim was depersonalized or at a distance; and (d) there were no role models for defiance.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- Which of the following is an example of conformity?
  - Malik has had a series of dogs over the years. Each has learned to curl up at his feet when he was watching television.
  - Renee begins to buy the same brand of sweatshirt that most of the kids in her school are wearing.
  - Jonah makes sure to arrive home before his curfew because he knows he will be grounded if he doesn't.
  - Yuri makes sure to arrive home before her curfew because she does not want her parents to be disappointed in her.
  - Terry cranks it up a notch during volleyball practice because the team captain has been on her case for not showing enough effort.
- Groundbreaking research on obedience was conducted by
  - Albert Bandura.
  - Solomon Asch.
  - Philip Zimbardo.
  - Stanley Milgram.
  - John Bargh.
- Classic studies of obedience indicate that about \_\_\_\_\_ of the participants were willing to administer what they believed to be 450-volt shocks to other humans.
  - one-tenth
  - one-half
  - one-third
  - one-fourth
  - two-thirds
- Obedience to authority when the authority figure is asking someone to shock another person is highest when
  - the person receiving orders has witnessed others defy the authority figure.
  - the person receiving orders wonders whether the person giving orders has legitimate authority.
  - the victim receiving the shocks is physically near the person receiving orders.
  - the authority figure is from a prestigious institution.
  - the person receiving the orders is female.

## Practice FRQs

1. Define conformity and obedience. Then, provide an example of each.

### Answer

**1 point:** Conformity is adjusting our behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard.

**1 point:** Obedience is following the orders of an authority figure.

**1 point:** Any correct example of conformity. Answers will vary.

**1 point:** Any correct example of obedience. Answers will vary.

2. Stanley Milgram's research on obedience triggered a debate over ethics. Explain the concern and Milgram's defense.

**(2 points)**

# Module 76

## Group Behavior

### Module Learning Objectives

- 76-1** Describe how our behavior is affected by the presence of others.
- 76-2** Explain group polarization and groupthink, and discuss the power of the individual.
- 76-3** Describe how behavior is influenced by cultural norms.



- 76-1** How is our behavior affected by the presence of others?

Imagine yourself standing in a room, holding a fishing pole. Your task is to wind the reel as fast as you can. On some occasions you wind in the presence of another participant who is also winding as fast as possible. Will the other's presence affect your own performance?

In one of social psychology's first experiments, Norman Triplett (1898) found that adolescents would wind a fishing reel faster in the presence of someone doing the same thing. He and later social psychologists studied how others' presence affects our behavior. Group influences operate in such simple groups—one person in the presence of another—and in more complex groups.

### Social Facilitation

Triplett's finding—of strengthened performance in others' presence—is called **social facilitation**. But on tougher tasks (learning nonsense syllables or solving complex multiplication problems), people perform worse when observers or others working on the same task are present. Further studies revealed that the presence of others sometimes helps and sometimes hinders performance (Guerin, 1986; Zajonc, 1965). Why? Because when others observe us, we become aroused, and this arousal amplifies our other reactions. It strengthens our most *likely* response—the correct one on an easy task, an incorrect one on a difficult task. Thus, expert pool players who made 71 percent of their shots when alone made 80 percent when four people came to watch them (Michaels et al., 1982). Poor shooters, who made 36 percent of their shots when alone, made only 25 percent when watched.

The energizing effect of an enthusiastic audience probably contributes to the home advantage that has shown up in studies of more than a quarter-million college and professional athletic events in various countries (Jamieson, 2010). Home teams win about 6 in 10 games (somewhat fewer for baseball, cricket, and football, somewhat more for basketball, rugby, and soccer—see **TABLE 76.1** on the next page).

#### AP® Exam Tip

As you work through this material, identify examples of group behavior in your own life. Then, compare your examples with a classmate's. This is a great way to make psychology come alive and to study effectively.

**social facilitation** improved performance on simple or well-learned tasks in the presence of others.



**Table 76.1 Home Advantage in Team Sports**

Sport	Games Studied	Home Team Winning Percentage
Baseball	120,576	55.6%
Cricket	513	57.0
American football	11,708	57.3
Ice hockey	50,739	59.5
Basketball	30,174	62.9
Rugby	2,653	63.7
Soccer	40,380	67.4

Source: From Jeremy Jamieson (2010).

& Schiavo, 1976; Storms & Thomas, 1977). So, for an energetic class or event, choose a room or set up seating that will just barely accommodate everyone.

## Social Loafing

Social facilitation experiments test the effect of others' presence on performance on an individual task, such as shooting pool. But what happens to performance when people perform the task as a group? In a team tug-of-war, for example, do you suppose your effort would be more than, less than, or the same as the effort you would exert in a one-on-one tug-of-war? To find out, a University of Massachusetts research team asked blindfolded students "to pull as hard as you can" on a rope. When they fooled the students into believing three others were also pulling behind them, they exerted only 82 percent as much effort as when they thought they were pulling alone (Ingham et al., 1974). And consider what happened when blindfolded people seated in a group clapped or shouted as loud as they could while hearing (through headphones) other people clapping or shouting loudly (Latané, 1981). When they thought they were part of a group effort, the participants produced about one-third less noise than when clapping or shouting "alone."

**Working hard, or hardly working?** In group projects, social loafing often occurs, as individuals free ride on the efforts of others.



*The point to remember:* What you do well, you are likely to do even better in front of an audience, especially a friendly audience. What you normally find difficult may seem all but impossible when you are being watched.

Social facilitation also helps explain a funny effect of crowding. Comedians and actors know that a "good house" is a full one. Crowding triggers arousal, which, as we have seen, strengthens other reactions, too. Comedy routines that are mildly amusing to people in an uncrowded room seem funnier in a densely packed room (Aiello et al., 1983; Freedman & Perlick, 1979). And in experiments, when participants have been seated close to one another, they liked a friendly person even more, an unfriendly person even less (Schiffenbauer

Bibb Latané and his colleagues (1981; Jackson & Williams, 1988) described this diminished effort as **social loafing**. Experiments in the United States, India, Thailand, Japan, China, and Taiwan have recorded social loafing on various tasks, though it was especially common among men in individualist cultures (Karau & Williams, 1993). What causes social loafing? Three things:

- People acting as part of a group feel less accountable, and therefore worry less about what others think.
- Group members may view their individual contributions as dispensable (Harkins & Szymanski, 1989; Kerr & Bruun, 1983).
- When group members share equally in the benefits, regardless of how much they contribute, some may slack off (as you perhaps have observed on group assignments). Unless highly motivated and strongly identified with the group, people may *free ride* on others' efforts.

**social loafing** the tendency for people in a group to exert less effort when pooling their efforts toward attaining a common goal than when individually accountable.

**deindividuation** the loss of self-awareness and self-restraint occurring in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity.

## Deindividuation

We've seen that the presence of others can arouse people (social facilitation), or it can diminish their feelings of responsibility (social loafing). But sometimes the presence of others does both. The uninhibited behavior that results can range from a food fight to vandalism or rioting. This process of losing self-awareness and self-restraint, called **deindividuation**, often occurs when group participation makes people both *aroused* and *anonymous*. In one experiment, New York University women dressed in depersonalizing Ku Klux Klan-style hoods. Compared with identifiable women in a control group, the hooded women delivered twice as much electric shock to a victim (Zimbardo, 1970). (As in all such experiments, the "victim" did not actually receive the shocks.)

Deindividuation thrives, for better or for worse, in many different settings. Tribal warriors who depersonalize themselves with face paints or masks are more likely than those with exposed faces to kill, torture, or mutilate captured enemies (Watson, 1973). Online, Internet trolls and bullies, who would never say "You're so fake" to someone's face, will hide behind anonymity. Whether in a mob, at a rock concert, at a ballgame, or at worship, when we shed self-awareness and self-restraint, we become more responsive to the group experience—bad or good.

\* \* \*

We have examined the conditions under which being in the *presence* of others can motivate people to exert themselves or tempt them to free ride on the efforts of others, make easy tasks easier and difficult tasks harder, and enhance humor or fuel mob violence. Research also shows that *interacting* with others can similarly have both bad and good effects.



**Deindividuation** During England's 2011 riots and looting, rioters were disinhibited by social arousal and by the anonymity provided by darkness and their hoods and masks. Later, some of those arrested expressed bewilderment over their own behavior.

## Group Polarization

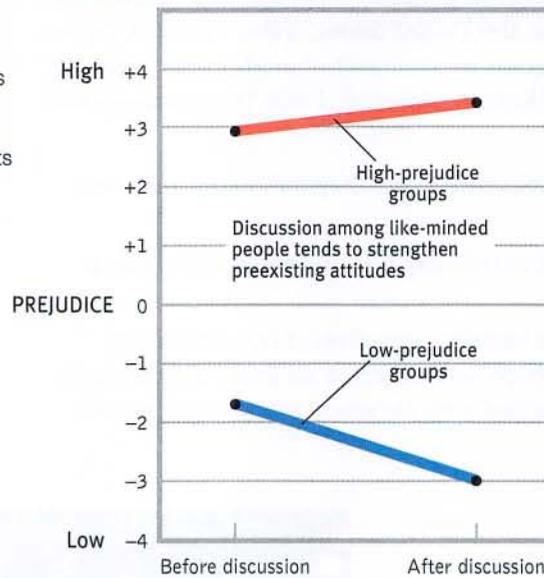
76-2

What are group polarization and groupthink, and how much power do we have as individuals?

Over time, initial differences between groups of college students tend to grow. If the first-year students at College X tend to be artistic and those at College Y tend to be business-savvy, those differences will probably be even greater by the time they graduate. Similarly, gender differences tend to widen over time, as Eleanor Maccoby (2002) noted from her decades of observing gender development. Girls talk more intimately than boys do and play

**Figure 76.1**

**Group polarization** If a group is like-minded, discussion strengthens its prevailing opinions. Talking over racial issues increased prejudice in a high-prejudice group of high school students and decreased it in a low-prejudice group (Myers & Bishop, 1970).



and fantasize less aggressively; these differences will be amplified as boys and girls interact mostly with their own gender.

In each case, the beliefs and attitudes we bring to a group grow stronger as we discuss them with like-minded others. This process, called **group polarization**, can have beneficial results, as when it amplifies a sought-after spiritual awareness or reinforces the resolve of those in a self-help group. But it can also have dire consequences. George Bishop and I discovered that when high-prejudice students discussed racial issues, they became *more* prejudiced (**FIGURE 76.1**). (Low-prejudice students became even more accepting.) Thus ideological separation + deliberation = polarization between groups.

#### group polarization

the enhancement of a group's prevailing inclinations through discussion within the group.

Group polarization can feed extremism and even suicide terrorism. Analysis of terrorist organizations around the world reveals that the terrorist mentality does not erupt suddenly, on a whim (McCauley, 2002; McCauley & Segal, 1987; Merari, 2002). It usually begins slowly, among people who share a grievance. As they interact in isolation (sometimes with other "brothers" and "sisters" in camps) their views grow more and more extreme. Increasingly, they categorize the world as "us" against "them" (Moghaddam, 2005; Qirko, 2004). The like-minded echo chamber will continue to polarize people, speculated a 2006 U.S. National Intelligence estimate: "We assess that the operational threat from self-radicalized cells will grow."

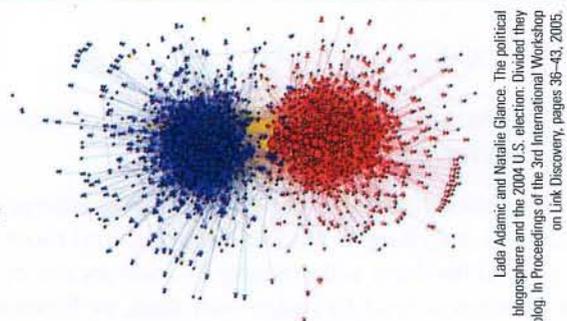
When I got my start in social psychology with experiments on group polarization, I never imagined the potential dangers, or the creative possibilities, of polarization in *virtual* groups. Electronic communication and social networking have created virtual town halls where people can isolate themselves from those whose perspective differs. People read blogs that reinforce their views, and those blogs link to kindred blogs (**FIGURE 76.2**). As the Internet connects the like-minded and pools their ideas, climate-change skeptics, those who believe they've been abducted by aliens, and conspiracy theorists find support for their shared ideas and suspicions. White supremacists may become more racist. And militia members may become more terrorism prone. In the echo chambers of virtual worlds, as in the real world, separation + conversation = polarization.

But the Internet-as-social-amplifier can also work for good. Social networking sites connect friends and family members sharing common interests or coping with challenges. Peacemakers, cancer survivors, and bereaved parents can find strength and solace from kindred

"What explains the rise of facism in the 1930s? The emergence of student radicalism in the 1960s? The growth of Islamic terrorism in the 1990s? . . . The unifying theme is simple: *When people find themselves in groups of like-minded types, they are especially likely to move to extremes.* [This] is the phenomenon of group polarization." -CASS SUNSTEIN, *GOING TO EXTREMES*, 2009

**Figure 76.2**

**Like minds network in the blogosphere** Blue liberal blogs link mostly to one another, as do red conservative blogs. (The intervening colors display links across the liberal-conservative boundary.) Each blog's size reflects the number of other blogs linking to it. (From Lazer et al., 2009.)



Lada Adamic and Natalie Glance. The political blogosphere and the 2004 U.S. election: Divided they blog. In Proceedings of the 3rd International Workshop on Link Discovery, pages 36–43, 2005.

spirits. By amplifying shared concerns and ideas, Internet-enhanced communication can also foster social ventures. (I know this personally from social networking with others with hearing loss to transform U. S. assistive-listening technology.)

*The point to remember:* By linking and magnifying the inclinations of like-minded people, the Internet can be very, very bad, but also very, very good.

## Groupthink

So group interaction can influence our personal decisions. Does it ever distort important national decisions? Consider the “Bay of Pigs fiasco.” In 1961, President John F. Kennedy and his advisers decided to invade Cuba with 1400 CIA-trained Cuban exiles. When the invaders were easily captured and soon linked to the U.S. government, Kennedy wondered in hindsight, “How could we have been so stupid?”

Social psychologist Irving Janis (1982) studied the decision-making procedures leading to the ill-fated invasion. He discovered that the soaring morale of the recently elected president and his advisers fostered undue confidence. To preserve the good feeling, group members suppressed or self-censored their dissenting views, especially after President Kennedy voiced his enthusiasm for the scheme. Since no one spoke strongly against the idea, everyone assumed the support was unanimous. To describe this harmonious but unrealistic group thinking, Janis coined the term **groupthink**.

Later studies showed that groupthink—fed by overconfidence, conformity, self-justification, and group polarization—contributed to other fiascos as well. Among them were the failure to anticipate the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor; the escalation of the Vietnam war; the U.S. Watergate cover-up; the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident (Reason, 1987); the U.S. space shuttle *Challenger* explosion (Esser & Lindoerfer, 1989); and the Iraq war, launched on the false idea that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, 2004).

Despite the dangers of groupthink, two heads are better than one in solving many problems. Knowing this, Janis also studied instances in which U.S. presidents and their advisers collectively made good decisions, such as when the Truman administration formulated the Marshall Plan, which offered assistance to Europe after World War II, and when the Kennedy administration successfully prevented the Soviets from installing missiles in Cuba. In such instances—and in the business world, too, Janis believed—groupthink is prevented when a leader welcomes various opinions, invites experts’ critiques of developing plans, and assigns people to identify possible problems. Just as the suppression of dissent bends a group toward bad decisions, so open debate often shapes good ones. This is especially so with diverse groups, whose varied perspectives often enable creative or superior outcomes (Nemeth & Ormiston, 2007; Page, 2007). None of us is as smart as all of us.

## The Power of Individuals

In affirming the power of social influence, we must not overlook the power of individuals. *Social control* (the power of the situation) and *personal control* (the power of the individual) interact. People aren’t billiard balls. When feeling coerced, we may react by doing the opposite of what is expected, thereby reasserting our sense of freedom (Brehm & Brehm, 1981).

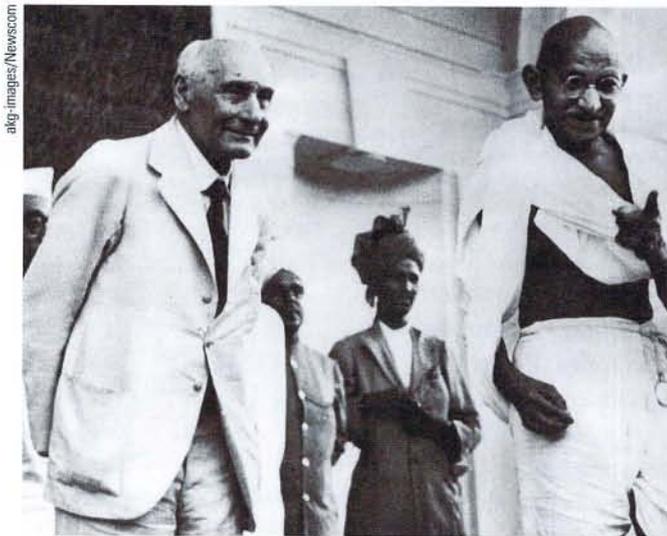
Committed individuals can sway the majority and make social history. Were this not so, communism would have remained an obscure theory, Christianity would be a small Middle Eastern sect, and Rosa Parks’ refusal to sit at the back of the bus would not have ignited the U.S. civil rights movement. Technological history, too, is often made by innovative minorities who overcome the majority’s resistance to change. To many, the railroad was a nonsensical idea; some farmers even feared that train noise would prevent hens from laying eggs. People

“One of the dangers in the White House, based on my reading of history, is that you get wrapped up in groupthink and everybody agrees with everything, and there’s no discussion and there are no dissenting views.” -BARACK OBAMA, DECEMBER 1, 2008, PRESS CONFERENCE

“Truth springs from argument among friends.” -PHILOSOPHER DAVID HUME, 1711–1776

“If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.” -ATTRIBUTED TO DRAMATIST GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, 1856–1950

**groupthink** the mode of thinking that occurs when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives.



**Gandhi** As the life of Hindu nationalist and spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi powerfully testifies, a consistent and persistent minority voice can sometimes sway the majority. Gandhi's nonviolent appeals and fasts were instrumental in winning India's independence from Britain in 1947.

1994). The powers of social influence are enormous, but so are the powers of the committed individual.

## Cultural Influences

### 76-3 How do cultural norms affect our behavior?

Compared with the narrow path taken by flies, fish, and foxes, the road along which environment drives us is wider. The mark of our species—nature's great gift to us—is our ability to learn and adapt. We come equipped with a huge cerebral hard drive ready to receive cultural software.

**Culture** is the behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, and traditions shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next (Brislin, 1988; Cohen, 2009). Human nature, notes Roy Baumeister (2005), seems designed for culture. We are social animals, but more. Wolves are social animals; they live and hunt in packs. Ants are incessantly social, never alone. But "culture is a better way of being social," notes Baumeister. Wolves function pretty much as they did 10,000 years ago. You and I enjoy things unknown to most of our century-ago ancestors, including electricity, indoor plumbing, antibiotics, and the Internet. Culture works.

Other animals exhibit the rudiments of culture. Primates have local customs of tool use, grooming, and courtship. Younger chimpanzees and macaque monkeys sometimes invent customs—potato washing, in one famous example—and pass them on to their peers and offspring. But human culture does more. It supports our species' survival and reproduction by enabling social and economic systems that give us an edge.

Thanks to our mastery of language, we humans enjoy the *preservation of innovation*. Within the span of this day, I have, thanks to my culture, made good use of Post-it Notes, Google, and digital hearing technology. Moreover, culture enables an efficient *division of labor*. Although one lucky person gets his name on this book's cover, the product actually results from the coordination and commitment of a team of people, no one of whom could produce it alone.

Across cultures, we differ in our language, our monetary systems, our sports, which fork—if any—we eat with, even which side of the road we drive on. But beneath these differences is our great similarity—our capacity for culture. Culture transmits the customs and beliefs that enable us to communicate, to exchange money for things, to play, to eat, and to drive with agreed-upon rules and without crashing into one another.

**culture** the enduring behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, and traditions shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next.

## Variation Across Cultures

We see our adaptability in cultural variations among our beliefs and our values, in how we raise our children and bury our dead, and in what we wear (or whether we wear anything at all). I am ever mindful that the readers of this book are culturally diverse. You and your ancestors reach from Australia to Africa and from Singapore to Sweden.

Riding along with a unified culture is like biking with the wind: As it carries us along, we hardly notice it is there. When we try riding *against* the wind, we feel its force. Face to face with a different culture, we become aware of the cultural winds. Stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait, American and European soldiers were reminded how liberal their home cultures were.

Humans in varied cultures nevertheless share some basic moral ideas, as we noted earlier. Even before they can walk, babies display a moral sense by showing disapproval of what's wrong or naughty (Bloom, 2010). Yet each cultural group also evolves its own **norms**—rules for accepted and expected behavior. The British have a norm for orderly waiting in line. Many South Asians use only the right hand's fingers for eating. Sometimes social expectations seem oppressive: "Why should it matter how I dress?" Yet, norms grease the social machinery and free us from self-preoccupation.

When cultures collide, their differing norms often befuddle. Should we greet people by shaking hands or kissing each cheek? The answer depends on the surrounding culture. Learning when to clap or bow, how to order at a new restaurant, and what sorts of gestures and compliments are appropriate help us avoid accidental insults and embarrassment.

When we don't understand what's expected or accepted, we may experience *culture shock*. People from Mediterranean cultures have perceived northern Europeans as efficient but cold and preoccupied with punctuality (Triandis, 1981). People from time-conscious Japan—where bank clocks keep exact time, pedestrians walk briskly, and postal clerks fill requests speedily—have found themselves growing impatient when visiting Indonesia, where clocks keep less accurate time and the pace of life is more leisurely (Levine & Norenzayan, 1999). In adjusting to their host countries, the first wave of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers reported that two of their greatest culture shocks, after the language differences, were the differing pace of life and the people's differing sense of punctuality (Spradley & Phillips, 1972).



**norm** an understood rule for accepted and expected behavior. Norms prescribe "proper" behavior.

## Variation Over Time

Like biological creatures, cultures vary and compete for resources, and thus evolve over time (Mesoudi, 2009). Consider how rapidly cultures may change. English poet Geoffrey Chaucer (1342–1400) is separated from a modern Briton by only 25 generations, but the two would converse with great difficulty. In the thin slice of history since 1960, most Western cultures have changed with remarkable speed. Middle-class people today fly to places they once only read about. They enjoy the convenience of air-conditioned housing, online shopping, anywhere-anytime electronic communication, and—enriched by doubled per-person real income—eating out more than twice as often as did their grandparents back in the culture of 1960. Many minority groups enjoy expanded human rights. And, with greater economic independence, today's women more often marry for love and less often endure abusive relationships (Circle of Prevention, 2002).

But some changes seem not so wonderfully positive. Had you fallen asleep in the United States in 1960 and awakened today, you would open your eyes to a culture with

© The New Yorker Collection, 2010, Harry Bliss from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved

more divorce and depression. You would also find North Americans—like their counterparts in Britain, Australia, and New Zealand—spending more hours at work, fewer hours with friends and family, and fewer hours asleep (BLS, 2011; Putnam, 2000).

Whether we love or loathe these changes, we cannot fail to be impressed by their breathtaking speed. And we cannot explain them by changes in the human gene pool, which evolves far too slowly to account for high-speed cultural transformations. Cultures vary. Cultures change. And cultures shape our lives.

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

What two examples of social influence have you experienced this week? (Remember, influence may be informational.)

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

You are organizing a Town Hall–style meeting of fiercely competitive political candidates. To add to the fun, friends have suggested handing out masks of the candidates' faces for supporters to wear. What phenomenon might these masks engage?

Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.

## Module 76 Review

### 76-1 How is our behavior affected by the presence of others?

- In *social facilitation*, the mere presence of others arouses us, improving our performance on easy or well-learned tasks but decreasing it on difficult ones.
- In *social loafing*, participating in a group project makes us feel less responsible, and we may free ride on others' efforts.
- When the presence of others both arouses us and makes us feel anonymous, we may experience *deindividuation*—loss of self-awareness and self-restraint.

### 76-2 What are group polarization and groupthink, and how much power do we have as individuals?

- In *group polarization*, group discussions with like-minded others strengthen members' prevailing beliefs and attitudes. Internet communication magnifies this effect, for better and for worse.
- *Groupthink* is driven by a desire for harmony within a decision-making group, overriding realistic appraisal of alternatives.
- The power of the individual and the power of the situation interact. A small minority that consistently expresses its views may sway the majority.

### 76-3 How do cultural norms affect our behavior?

- A *culture* is a set of behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, and traditions shared by a group and transmitted from one generation to the next.
- Cultural *norms* are understood rules that inform members of a culture about accepted and expected behaviors.
- Cultures differ across time and space.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. What do we call the improved performance on simple or well-learned tasks in the presence of others?
  - a. Social facilitation
  - b. Group behavior
  - c. Social loafing
  - d. Deindividuation
  - e. Group polarization
2. Which of the following terms or phrases best describes the behavior of rowdy fans yelling obscenities at a football or soccer referee after a controversial penalty has been called?
  - a. Culture
  - b. Social facilitation
  - c. Groupthink
  - d. Deindividuation
  - e. Group polarization
3. Which of the following is most likely to occur when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives?
  - a. Group polarization
  - b. Groupthink
  - c. Social loafing
  - d. Norming
  - e. Prejudice
4. What do we call the enduring behaviors, ideas, attitudes, values, and traditions shared by a group of people and transmitted from one generation to the next?
  - a. Deindividuation
  - b. Norms
  - c. Social facilitation
  - d. Culture
  - e. Social control

## Practice FRQs

1. Describe the three causes of social loafing.

### Answer

**1 point:** People acting as part of a group feel less accountable.

**1 point:** Group members may view their individual contributions as dispensable.

**1 point:** Unless highly motivated and strongly identified with the group, people may free ride on others' efforts.

2. Define groupthink and group polarization. Then, provide an example of each.

**(4 points)**

# Module 77

## Prejudice and Discrimination

### Module Learning Objectives

**77-1** Define *prejudice*, and identify its social and emotional roots.

**77-2** Identify the cognitive roots of prejudice.



Paolo Bruno/Getty Images

We have sampled how we *think* about and *influence* one another. Now we come to social psychology's third focus—how we *relate* to one another. What causes us to harm or to help or to fall in love? How can we move a destructive conflict toward a just peace? We will ponder the bad and the good: from prejudice and aggression to attraction, altruism, and peacemaking.

**prejudice** an unjustifiable and usually negative *attitude* toward a group and its members. Prejudice generally involves stereotyped beliefs, negative feelings, and a predisposition to discriminatory action.

**stereotype** a generalized (sometimes accurate but often overgeneralized) *belief* about a group of people.

**discrimination** unjustifiable negative *behavior* toward a group and its members.

### Prejudice

**77-1** What is *prejudice*? What are its social and emotional roots?

**Prejudice** means “prejudgment.” It is an unjustifiable and usually negative attitude toward a group—often a different cultural, ethnic, or gender group. Like all attitudes, prejudice is a three-part mixture of

- *beliefs* (in this case, called **stereotypes**).
- *emotions* (for example, hostility or fear).
- predispositions to *action* (to discriminate).

*Ethnocentrism*—assuming the superiority of one’s ethnic group—is one example of prejudice. To *believe* that a person of another ethnicity is somehow inferior or threatening, to *feel* dislike for that person, and to be hesitant to hire or date that person is to be prejudiced. Prejudice is a negative *attitude*. **Discrimination** is a negative *behavior*.

### FYI

Percentage of 2010 American marriages to someone whose race or ethnicity differed from one’s own:

Whites	9%
Blacks	17%
Hispanics	26%
Asians	28%

Source: Wang, 2012

### How Prejudiced Are People?

To assess prejudice, we can observe what people say and what they do. Americans’ expressed gender and racial attitudes have changed dramatically in the last half-century. The one-third of Americans who in 1937 told Gallup pollsters that they would vote for a qualified woman whom their party nominated for president soared to 89 percent in 2007 (Gallup Brain, 2008; Jones & Moore, 2003). Nearly everyone now agrees that women and men should receive the same pay for the same job, and that children of all races should attend the same schools.

Support for all forms of racial contact, including interracial dating (**FIGURE 77.1**), has also dramatically increased. Among 18- to 29-year old Americans, 9 in 10 now say they would be fine with a family member marrying someone of a different race (Pew, 2010).

Yet as *overt* prejudice wanes, *subtle* prejudice lingers. Despite increased verbal support for interracial marriage, many people admit that in socially intimate settings (dating, dancing, marrying) they would feel uncomfortable with someone of another race. And many people who *say* they would feel upset with someone making racist slurs actually, when hearing such racism, respond indifferently (Kawakami et al., 2009). In Western Europe, where many “guest workers” and refugees settled at the end of the twentieth century, “modern prejudice”—rejecting immigrant minorities as job applicants for supposedly nonracial reasons—has been replacing blatant prejudice (Jackson et al., 2001; Lester, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998, 2006). A slew of recent experiments illustrates that prejudice can be not only subtle but also automatic and unconscious (see Close-up: Automatic Prejudice on the next page).

Nevertheless, overt prejudice persists in many places. Just ask Italy’s AC Milan soccer star Kevin-Prince Boateng (pictured at the beginning of this module), of Ghanaian descent, who strode off the field in protest after being subjected to racial taunts from spectators. And in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, 4 in 10 Americans acknowledged “some feelings of prejudice against Muslims,” and about half of non-Muslims in Western Europe and the United States perceived Muslims as “violent” (Saad, 2006; Wike & Grim, 2007). With Americans feeling threatened by Arabs, and as opposition to Islamic mosques and immigration flared in 2010, one national observer noted that “Muslims are one of the last minorities in the United States that it is still possible to demean openly” (Kristof, 2010; Lyons et al., 2010). Muslims reciprocated the negativity, with most in Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and Britain seeing Westerners as “greedy” and “immoral.”

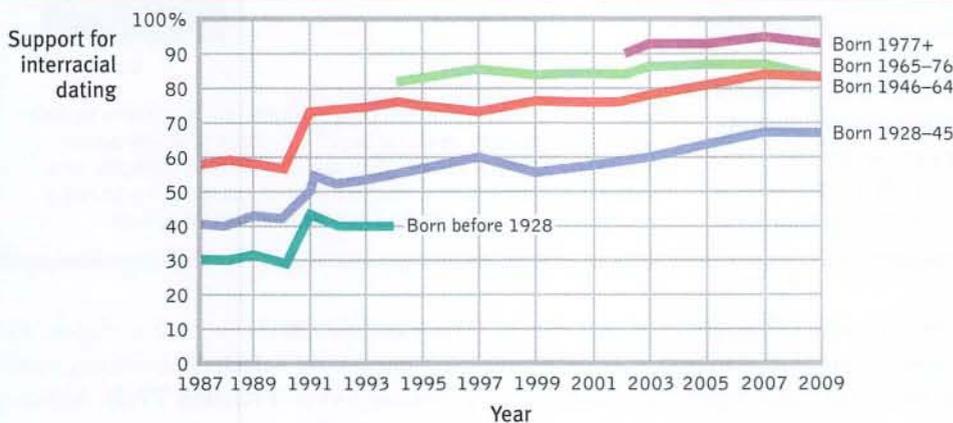
In most places in the world, gays and lesbians cannot comfortably acknowledge who they are and whom they love. Gender prejudice and discrimination persist, too. Despite gender equality in intelligence scores, people have tended to perceive their fathers as more intelligent than their mothers (Furnham & Rawles, 1995). In Saudi Arabia, women are not allowed to drive. In Western countries, we pay more to those (usually men) who care for our streets than to those (usually women) who care for our children. Worldwide, women are more likely to live in poverty (Lipps, 1999), and two-thirds of illiterate adults are women (CIA, 2010).

Unwanted female infants are no longer left out on a hillside to die of exposure, as was the practice in ancient Greece. Yet natural female mortality and the normal male-to-female newborn ratio (105-to-100) hardly explain the world’s estimated 163 million

### AP® Exam Tip

It’s worth spending a little time focusing on the distinction between discrimination and prejudice. They are related, but different. The most important thing to note is that prejudice is cognitive in nature. Discrimination, on the other hand, is behavior motivated by prejudice.

“Unhappily, the world has yet to learn how to live with diversity.”  
-POPE JOHN PAUL II, ADDRESS TO THE UNITED NATIONS, 1995



**Figure 77.1**

**Prejudice over time** Americans’ approval of interracial dating has soared over the past quarter-century (Pew, 2010).

## Close-up

## Automatic Prejudice

As we have seen throughout this book, the human mind processes thoughts, memories, and attitudes on two different tracks. Sometimes that processing is explicit—on the radar screen of our awareness. To an even greater extent, it is implicit—below the radar, leaving us unaware of how our attitudes are influencing our behavior. Modern studies indicate that prejudice is often implicit, an automatic attitude that is an unthinking knee-jerk response. Consider these findings:

**Implicit Racial Associations** Using Implicit Association Tests, researchers have demonstrated that even people who deny harboring racial prejudice may carry negative associations (Greenwald et al., 1998, 2009). (By 2011, nearly 5 million people had taken the Implicit Association Test, as you can at [www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu).) For example, 9 in 10 White respondents took longer to identify pleasant words (such as *peace* and *paradise*) as “good” when presented with Black-sounding names (such as *Latisha* and *Darnell*) rather than White-sounding names (such as *Katie* and *Ian*). Moreover, people who more quickly associate good things with White names or faces also are the quickest to perceive anger and apparent threat in Black faces (Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003).

Although the test is useful for studying automatic prejudice, critics caution against using it to assess or label individuals (Blanton et al., 2006, 2007, 2009). Defenders counter that implicit biases predict behaviors that range from simple acts of friendliness to the evaluation of work quality (Greenwald et al., 2009). In the 2008 U.S. presidential election, implicit as well as explicit prejudice predicted voters’ support for candidate Barack Obama, whose election in turn served to reduce implicit prejudice (Bernstein et al., 2010; Payne et al., 2010).

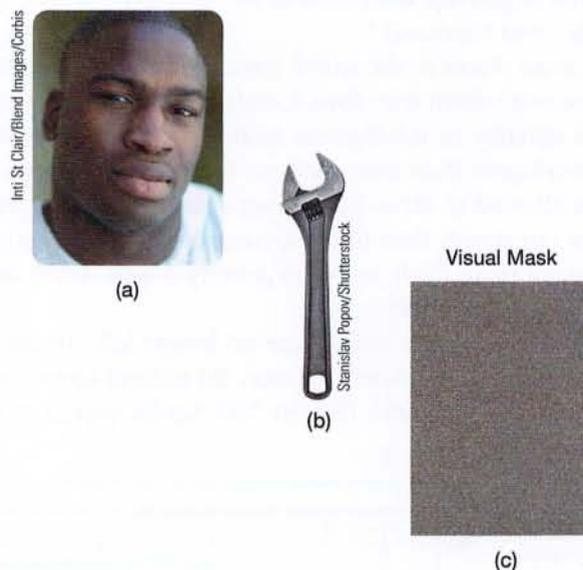
**Unconscious Patronization** When White university women evaluated a flawed essay said to be written by a Black fellow student, they gave markedly higher ratings and never expressed the harsh criticisms they assigned to flawed essays supposedly written by White students (Harber, 1998). Did the evaluators calibrate their evaluations to their racial stereotypes, leading to less exacting standards and a patronizing attitude? In real-world evaluations, such low expectations and the resulting “inflated praise and insufficient criticism” could hinder minority student achievement, the researcher noted. (To preclude such bias, many teachers read essays while “blind” to their authors.)

**Race-Influenced Perceptions** Our expectations influence our perceptions. In 1999, Amadou Diallo was accosted as he approached his apartment house doorway by police officers looking for a rapist. When he pulled out his wallet, the officers, perceiving a gun, riddled his body with 19 bullets from 41 shots. Curious about

this killing of an unarmed man, two research teams reenacted the situation (Correll et al., 2002, 2007; Greenwald et al., 2003). They asked viewers to press buttons quickly to “shoot” or not shoot men who suddenly appeared on screen. Some of the on-screen men held a gun. Others held a harmless object, such as a flashlight or bottle. People (both Blacks and Whites, in one study) more often shot Black men holding the harmless objects. Priming people with a flashed Black rather than White face also makes them more likely to misperceive a flashed tool as a gun (FIGURE 77.2).

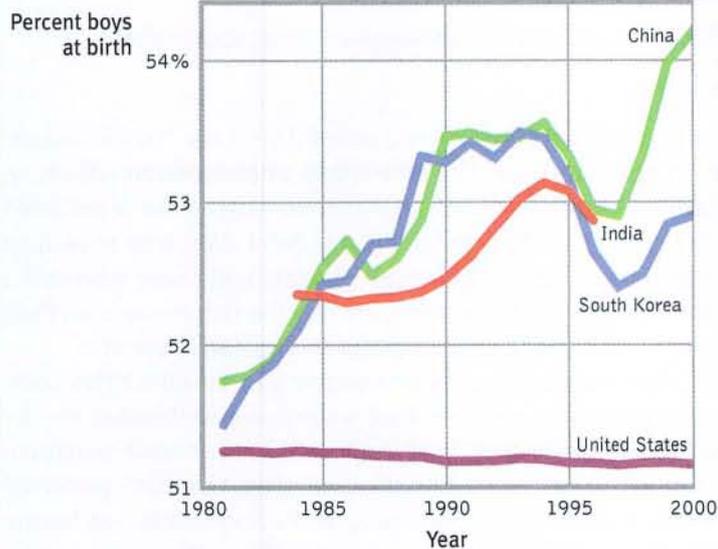
**Reflexive Bodily Responses** Even people who consciously express little prejudice may give off telltale signals as their body responds selectively to another’s race. Neuroscientists can detect these signals when people look at White and Black faces. The viewers’ implicit prejudice may show up in facial-muscle responses and in the activation of their emotion-processing amygdala (Cunningham et al., 2004; Eberhardt, 2005; Stanley et al., 2008).

If your own gut check reveals you sometimes have feelings you would rather not have about other people, remember this: It is what we *do* with our feelings that matters. By monitoring our feelings and actions, and by replacing old habits with new ones based on new friendships, we can work to free ourselves from prejudice.



**Figure 77.2 Race primes perceptions** In experiments by Keith Payne (2006), people viewed (a) a White or Black face, immediately followed by (b) a gun or hand tool, which was then followed by (c) a visual mask. Participants were more likely to misperceive a tool as a gun when it was preceded by a Black rather than White face.

(say that number slowly) “missing women” (Hvistendahl, 2011). In many places, sons are valued more than daughters. With testing that enables sex-selective abortions, several Asian countries have experienced a shortfall in female births (FIGURE 77.3). Although China has declared that sex-selective abortions—gender genocide—are now a criminal offense, the country’s newborn sex ratio is still 118 boys for every 100 girls (Hvistendahl,

**Figure 77.3**

**Missing girls** In several Asian countries, especially in China, which has mandated one-child families, boy babies are overrepresented (Abrevaya, 2009). In China, this overrepresentation still occurred in 2009: 54.5 percent of babies were boys and only 45.5 percent were girls (Hvistendahl, 2010).

2009, 2010, 2011), and 95 percent of the children in Chinese orphanages are girls (Webley, 2009). With males under age 20 exceeding females by 32 million, many Chinese bachelors will be unable to find mates (Zhu et al., 2009).

In the United States, a striking sex-ratio bias appears among Chinese, Korean, and Asian Indian parents with a third child. Sons outnumber daughters by 50 percent after two previous girl births. Given a previous boy birth, or given Caucasian parents, there is no sex-ratio bias (Almond & Edlund, 2008).

Studies have shown, however, that most people *feel* more positively about women in general than they do about men (Eagly, 1994; Haddock & Zanna, 1994). Worldwide, people see women as having some traits (such as nurturance, sensitivity, and less aggressiveness) that most people prefer (Glick et al., 2004; Swim, 1994). That may explain why women tend to like women more than men like men (Rudman & Goodwin, 2004). And perhaps that is also why people prefer slightly feminized computer-generated faces—men’s and women’s—to slightly masculinized faces. Researcher David Perrett and his colleagues (1998) have speculated that a slightly feminized male face connotes kindness, cooperativeness, and other traits of a good father. When the British Broadcasting Corporation invited 18,000 women to guess which of the men in **FIGURE 77.4** was most likely to place a personal ad seeking a “special lady to love and cherish forever,” which one do you think they picked?

Professor Dave Perrett, St. Andrews University



(a)



(b)

**Figure 77.4**

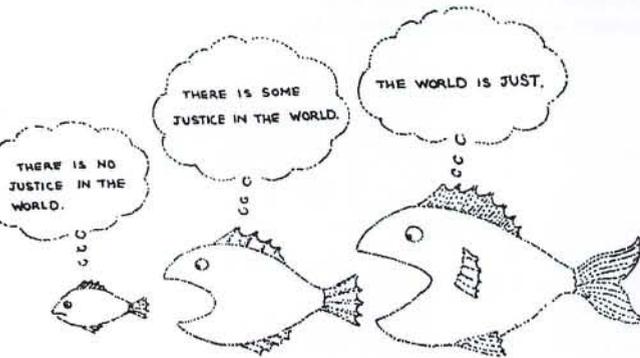
**Who do you like best?** Which one placed an ad seeking “a special lady to love and cherish forever”? (See answer below.)

Research suggests that subtly feminized features convey a likable image, which people tend to associate more with committed dads than with promiscuous cads. Thus, 66 percent of the women picked computer-generated face (b) in response to both of these questions.

**just-world phenomenon**

the tendency for people to believe the world is just and that people therefore get what they deserve and deserve what they get.

© The New Yorker Collection, 1981; Robert Mankoff from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.



"If the King destroys a man, that's proof to the King it must have been a bad man." -THOMAS CROMWELL, IN ROBERT BOLT'S *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS*, 1960

**ingroup** "Us"—people with whom we share a common identity.

**outgroup** "Them"—those perceived as different or apart from our ingroup.

**ingroup bias** the tendency to favor our own group.

**The ingroup** Basketball fans, shown here from my own college during a game against their archrival, share a social identity that defines "us" (the ingroup) and "them" (the outgroup).



Courtesy Hope College Public Relations

## Social Roots of Prejudice

Why does prejudice arise? Social inequalities and divisions are partly responsible.

### SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

When some people have money, power, and prestige and others do not, the "haves" usually develop attitudes that justify things as they are. The **just-world phenomenon** reflects an idea we commonly teach our children—that good is rewarded and evil is punished. From this it is but a short leap to assume that those who succeed must be good and those who suffer must be bad. Such reasoning enables the rich to see both their own wealth and the poor's misfortune as justly deserved.

Are women naturally unassertive and sensitive? This common perception suggests that women are well-suited for the caretaking tasks they have traditionally performed (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990). In an extreme case, slave "owners" perceived slaves as innately lazy, ignorant, and irresponsible—as having the very traits that justified enslaving them. Stereotypes rationalize inequalities.

Victims of discrimination may react with either self-blame or anger (Allport, 1954). Either reaction can feed prejudice through the classic *blame-the-victim* dynamic. Do the circumstances of poverty breed a higher crime rate? If so, that higher crime rate can be used to justify discrimination against those who live in poverty.

### US AND THEM: INGROUP AND OUTGROUP

We have inherited our Stone Age ancestors' need to belong, to live and love in groups. There was safety in solidarity (those who didn't band together left fewer descendants). Whether hunting, defending, or attacking, 10 hands were better than 2. Dividing the world into "us" and "them" entails racism and war, but it also provides the benefits of communal solidarity. Thus we cheer for our groups, kill for them, die for them. Indeed, we define who we are partly in terms of our groups. Through our *social identities* we associate ourselves with certain groups and contrast ourselves with others (Hogg, 1996, 2006; Turner, 1987, 2007). When Ian identifies himself as a man, an Aussie, a University of Sydney student, a Catholic, and a MacGregor, he knows who he is, and so do we.

Evolution prepared us, when encountering strangers, to make instant judgments: friend or foe? Those from our group, those who look like us, and also those who *sound* like us—with accents like our own—we instantly tend to like, from childhood onward (Gluszek & Dovidio, 2010; Kinzler et al., 2009). Mentally drawing a circle defines "us," the **ingroup**. But

the social definition of who you are also states who you are not. People outside that circle are "them," the **outgroup**. An **ingroup bias**—a favoring of our own group—soon follows. Even arbitrarily creating us-them groups by tossing a coin creates this bias. In experiments, people have favored their own group when dividing any rewards (Tajfel, 1982; Wilder, 1981).

The urge to distinguish enemies from friends predisposes prejudice against strangers (Whitley, 1999). To Greeks of the classical era, all non-Greeks were "barbarians." In our own era, most students believe their school is better than all other schools in town. Perhaps you can recall being most conscious of your school identity when competing with an archrival school. Many high school students form cliques—jocks, gamers, stoners, theater types, LGBT supporters—and disparage those outside their own group. Even chimpanzees

have been seen to wipe clean the spot where they were touched by a chimpanzee from another group (Goodall, 1986). They also display ingroup empathy, by yawning more after seeing ingroup (rather than outgroup) members yawn (Campbell & de Waal, 2011).

Ingroup bias explains the cognitive power of partisanship (Cooper, 2010; Douthat, 2010). In the United States in the late 1980s, most Democrats believed inflation had risen under Republican president Ronald Reagan (it had dropped). In 2010, most Republicans believed that taxes had increased under Democrat president Barack Obama (for most, they had decreased).

## Emotional Roots of Prejudice

Prejudice springs not only from the divisions of society but also from the passions of the heart. **Scapegoat theory** notes that when things go wrong, finding someone to blame can provide a target for anger. Following 9/11, some outraged people lashed out at innocent Arab-Americans. Others called for eliminating Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader whom Americans had been grudgingly tolerating. “Fear and anger create aggression, and aggression against citizens of different ethnicity or race creates racism and, in turn, new forms of terrorism,” noted Philip Zimbardo (2001). A decade after 9/11, anti-Muslim animosities still flared, with mosque burnings and efforts to block an Islamic community center near New York City’s Ground Zero.

Evidence for the scapegoat theory of prejudice comes from high prejudice levels among economically frustrated people, and from experiments in which a temporary frustration intensifies prejudice. Students who experience failure or are made to feel insecure often restore their self-esteem by disparaging a rival school or another person (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Crocker et al., 1987). To boost our own sense of status, it helps to have others to denigrate. That is why a rival’s misfortune sometimes provides a twinge of pleasure. By contrast, those made to feel loved and supported become more open to and accepting of others who differ (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2001).

Negative emotions nourish prejudice. When facing death, fearing threats, or experiencing frustration, people cling more tightly to their ingroup and their friends. As the terror of death heightens patriotism, it also produces loathing and aggression toward “them”—those who threaten our world (Pyszczynski et al., 2002, 2008). The few individuals who lack fear and its associated amygdala activity—such as children with the genetic disorder Williams syndrome—also display a notable lack of racial stereotypes and prejudice (Santos et al., 2010).

## Cognitive Roots of Prejudice

### 77-2 What are the cognitive roots of prejudice?

Prejudice springs from a culture’s divisions, the heart’s passions, and also from the mind’s natural workings. Stereotyped beliefs are a by-product of how we cognitively simplify the world.

### FORMING CATEGORIES

One way we simplify our world is to categorize. A chemist categorizes molecules as organic and inorganic. A football coach categorizes offensive players as quarterbacks, running backs, and wide receivers. Therapists categorize psychological disorders. Human beings categorize people by race, with mixed-race people often assigned to their minority identity. Despite his mixed-race background and being raised by a White mother and White grandparents, Barack Obama has been perceived by White Americans as Black. Researchers believe this happens because, after learning the features of a familiar racial group, the observer’s selective attention is drawn to the distinctive features of the less-familiar minority. Jamin Halberstadt and his colleagues (2011) illustrated this learned-association effect by showing New Zealanders blended Chinese-Caucasian faces. Compared with

“For if [people were] to choose out of all the customs in the world [they would] end by preferring their own.” -GREEK HISTORIAN HERODOTUS, 440 B.C.E.

**scapegoat theory** the theory that prejudice offers an outlet for anger by providing someone to blame.

“If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn’t move or the Earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: ‘The Christians to the lion!’” -TERTULLIAN, *APOLOGETICUS*, 197 C.E.

“The misfortunes of others are the taste of honey.” -JAPANESE SAYING

### AP® Exam Tip

Pause for a minute and try to identify examples of the just-world phenomenon, ingroup bias, and scapegoating in your own school. Are there a few or a lot?



Dr. Jamin Halberstadt, Steven J. Sherman, Jeff Sherman, and Gillian Rhodes

**Figure 77.5**

**Categorizing mixed-race people**

When New Zealanders quickly classified 104 photos by race, those of European descent more often than those of Chinese descent classified the ambiguous middle two as Chinese (Halberstadt et al., 2011).

participants of Chinese descent, European-descent New Zealanders more readily classified ambiguous faces as Chinese (see **FIGURE 77.5**).

In categorizing people into groups, however, we often stereotype them. We recognize how greatly *we* differ from other individuals in *our* groups. But we overestimate the homogeneity of other groups (we perceive *outgroup homogeneity*). “They”—the members of some other group—seem to look and act alike, while “we” are more diverse (Bothwell et al., 1989). To those in one ethnic group, members of another often seem more alike than they really are in attitudes, personality, and appearance. Our greater recognition for faces of our own race—called the **other-race effect** (also called the *cross-race effect* or *own-race bias*)—emerges during infancy, between 3 and 9 months of age (Gross, 2009; Kelly et al., 2007).

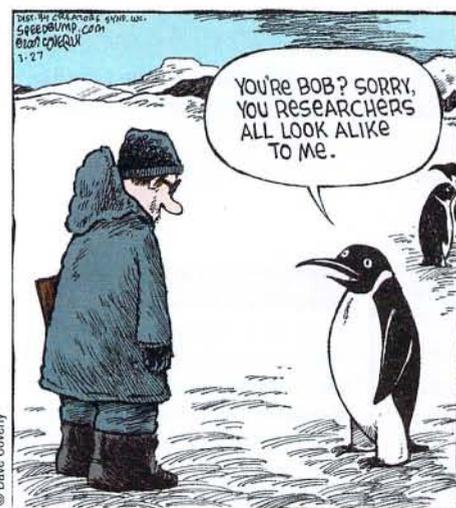
With effort and with experience, people get better at recognizing individual faces from another group (Hugenberg et al., 2010). People of European descent, for example, more accurately identify individual African faces if they have watched a great deal of basketball on television, exposing them to many African-heritage faces (Li et al., 1996). And the longer Chinese people have resided in a Western country, the less they exhibit the other-race effect (Hancock & Rhodes, 2008).

**REMEMBERING VIVID CASES**

As we saw in Module 35’s discussion of the availability heuristic, we often judge the frequency of events by instances that readily come to mind. In a classic experiment, researchers showed two groups of University of Oregon students lists containing information about 50 men (Rothbart et al., 1978). The first group’s list included 10 men arrested for *nonviolent* crimes, such as forgery. The second group’s list included 10 men arrested for *violent* crimes, such as assault. Later, both groups were asked how many men on their list had committed *any* sort of crime. The second group overestimated the number. Vivid (violent) cases are more readily available to our memory and feed our stereotypes (**FIGURE 77.6**).

**BELIEVING THE WORLD IS JUST**

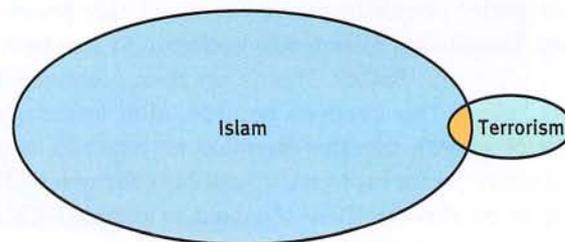
As we noted earlier, people often justify their prejudices by blaming victims. If the world is just, “people must get what they deserve.” As one German civilian is said to have remarked when visiting the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp shortly after World War II, “What terrible criminals these prisoners must have been to receive such treatment.”



**other-race effect** the tendency to recall faces of one’s own race more accurately than faces of other races. Also called the *cross-race effect* or the *own-race bias*.

**Figure 77.6**

**Vivid cases feed stereotypes** The 9/11 Muslim terrorists created, in many minds, an exaggerated stereotype of Muslims as terrorism prone. Actually, reported a U.S. National Research Council panel on terrorism, when offering this inexact illustration, most terrorists are not Muslim and “the vast majority of Islamic people have no connection with and do not sympathize with terrorism” (Smelser & Mitchell, 2002).



*Hindsight bias* is also at work here (Carli & Leonard, 1989). Have you ever heard people say that rape victims, abused spouses, or people with AIDS got what they deserved? In some countries, such as Pakistan, women who have been raped have sometimes been sentenced to severe punishment for having violated a law against adultery (Mydans, 2002). In one experiment illustrating the blame-the-victim phenomenon, people were given a detailed account of a date that ended with the woman being raped (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). They perceived the woman's behavior as at least partly to blame, and in hindsight, they thought, "She should have known better." (Blaming the victim also serves to reassure people that it couldn't happen to them.) Others, given the same account with the rape ending deleted, did not perceive the woman's behavior as inviting rape.

People also have a basic tendency to justify their culture's social systems (Jost et al., 2009; Kay et al., 2009). We're inclined to see the way things are as the way they ought to be. This natural conservatism makes it difficult to legislate major social changes, such as health care or climate-change policies. Once such policies are in place, our "system justification" tends to preserve them.

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

What are some examples of ingroup bias in your community?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

What is the difference between prejudice and discrimination?

Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.

## Module 77 Review

### 77-1 What is *prejudice*? What are its social and emotional roots?

- *Prejudice* is an unjustifiable, usually negative attitude toward a group and its members.
- Prejudice's three components are beliefs (often *stereotypes*), emotions, and predispositions to action (*discrimination*).
- Overt prejudice in North America has decreased over time, but implicit prejudice—an automatic, unthinking attitude—continues.
- The social roots of prejudice include social inequalities and divisions.
  - Higher-status groups often justify their privileged position with the *just-world phenomenon*.
  - We tend to favor our own group (*ingroup bias*) as we divide ourselves into "us" (the *ingroup*) and "them" (the *outgroup*).
- Prejudice can also be a tool for protecting our emotional well-being, as when we focus our anger by blaming events on a *scapegoat*.

### 77-2 What are the cognitive roots of prejudice?

- The cognitive roots of prejudice grow from our natural ways of processing information: forming categories, remembering vivid cases, and believing that the world is just and our own and our culture's ways of doing things are the right ways.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- Which of the following is the primary distinction between prejudice and discrimination?
  - Prejudice is cognitive and discrimination is behavioral.
  - Prejudice is based on anger and discrimination is based on fear.
  - Prejudice is a legal term and discrimination is a psychological term.
  - Discrimination typically develops in infancy and prejudice typically develops in adolescence.
  - Discrimination is primarily caused by nature and prejudice is primarily caused by nurture.
- Which of the following is true of prejudice in recent years?
  - Both overt and subtle prejudice have shown steady and equal increases.
  - Subtle prejudice has been decreasing more than overt prejudice.
  - Both overt and subtle prejudice have been increasing, but overt prejudice is increasing at a faster rate.
  - Both overt and subtle prejudice have been increasing, but subtle prejudice is increasing at a faster rate.
  - Overt prejudice has been decreasing more than subtle prejudice.
- Which of the following accurately describes the just-world phenomenon?
  - It's the reduction in prejudice that has resulted from improvements in our laws and judicial system.
  - It's the reduction in discrimination that has resulted from improvements in our laws and judicial system.
  - It's the belief that most people get what they deserve and deserve what they get.
  - It's the tendency of people to deny that prejudice is still a problem.
  - It's our mind's desire to categorize daily events as either "fair" or "unfair."
- Which of the following is an example of ingroup bias?
  - Hinata talked only to her five best friends when she was in ninth grade.
  - Sabrina has been a New York Yankee fan since she was in fourth grade.
  - Kimia believes she is the best student in her AP® Psychology class, but her grades are not as good as several students.
  - Francisco believes he is the best student in his AP® Psychology class, and in fact he has the highest test average.
  - Derek believes his t-ball team is the best in the league.
- A member of one racial group viciously beats someone from a different racial group. The incident is widely publicized in the local media. Which of the following terms best describes this incident?
  - Scapegoat theory
  - Vivid case
  - Just-world phenomenon
  - Other-race effect
  - Ingroup bias

## Practice FRQs

- Describe the three major components of prejudice.

### Answer

**1 point:** Stereotyped judgments, which are generalized, negative beliefs about a group of people.

**1 point:** Negative emotions, such as hostility or fear, toward the members of a group.

**1 point:** A predisposition to discriminate against members of a group.

- Describe an example of a social root of prejudice, an emotional root of prejudice, and a cognitive root of prejudice.

**(3 points)**

# Module 78

## Aggression

### Module Learning Objectives

**78-1** Explain how psychology's definition of *aggression* differs from everyday usage, and identify the biological factors that make us more prone to hurt one another.

**78-2** Outline psychological and social-cultural triggers of aggression.



**78-1** How does psychology's definition of *aggression* differ from everyday usage? What biological factors make us more prone to hurt one another?

Prejudice hurts, but aggression often hurts more. In psychology, **aggression** is any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy, whether done out of hostility or as a calculated means to an end. The assertive, persistent salesperson is not aggressive. Nor is the dentist who makes you wince with pain. But the person who passes along a vicious rumor about you, the person who verbally assaults you, and the attacker who mugs you for your money are aggressive.

Aggressive behavior emerges from the interaction of biology and experience. For a gun to fire, the trigger must be pulled; with some people, as with hair-trigger guns, it doesn't take much to trip an explosion. Let's look first at some biological factors that influence our thresholds for aggressive behavior, then at the psychological factors that pull the trigger.

## The Biology of Aggression

Aggression varies too widely from culture to culture, era to era, and person to person to be considered an unlearned instinct. But biology does *influence* aggression. We can look for biological influences at three levels—genetic, neural, and biochemical.

### Genetic Influences

Genes influence aggression. We know this because animals have been bred for aggressiveness—sometimes for sport, sometimes for research. The effect of genes also appears in human twin studies (Miles & Carey, 1997; Rowe et al., 1999). If one identical twin admits to “having a violent temper,” the other twin will often independently admit the same. Fraternal twins are much less likely to respond similarly. Researchers continue to search for genetic markers in those who commit the most violence. (One is already well known and is carried by half the human race: the Y chromosome.)

**aggression** any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy.

### FYI

In the last 40 years in the United States, well over 1 million people—more than all deaths in all wars in American history—have been killed by firearms in nonwar settings. Compared with people of the same sex, race, age, and neighborhood, those who keep a gun in the home (ironically, often for protection) are almost three times more likely to be murdered in the home—nearly always by a family member or close acquaintance. For every self-defense use of a gun in the home, there have been 4 unintentional shootings, 7 criminal assaults or homicides, and 11 attempted or completed suicides (Kellermann et al., 1993, 1997, 1998; see also Branas et al., 2009).

### AP® Exam Tip

Notice that you're back to a nature and nurture analysis again. The biology section is, of course, the nature component. When you get to the psychological and social-cultural factors coming up, that's nurture.

© The New Yorker Collection, 1995, Donald Reilly from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.



"It's a guy thing."

## Neural Influences

There is no one spot in the brain that controls aggression. Aggression is a complex behavior, and it occurs in particular contexts. But animal and human brains have neural systems that, given provocation, will either inhibit or facilitate aggressive behavior (Denson, 2011; Moyer, 1983). Consider:

- Researchers implanted a radio-controlled electrode in the brain of the domineering leader of a caged monkey colony. The electrode was in an area that, when stimulated, inhibits aggression. When researchers placed the control button for the electrode in the colony's cage, one small monkey learned to push it every time the boss became threatening.
- A neurosurgeon, seeking to diagnose a disorder, implanted an electrode in the amygdala of a mild-mannered woman. Because the brain has no sensory receptors, she was unable to feel the stimulation. But at the flick of a switch she snarled, "Take my blood pressure. Take it now," then stood up and began to strike the doctor.
- Studies of violent criminals have revealed diminished activity in the frontal lobes, which play an important role in controlling impulses. If the frontal lobes are damaged, inactive, disconnected, or not yet fully mature, aggression may be more likely (Amen et al., 1996; Davidson et al., 2000; Raine, 1999, 2005).

## Biochemical Influences

Our genes engineer our individual nervous systems, which operate electrochemically. The hormone testosterone, for example, circulates in the bloodstream and influences the neural systems that control aggression. A raging bull will become a gentle Ferdinand when castration reduces its testosterone level. The same is true of mice. When injected with testosterone, gentle, castrated mice once again become aggressive.

Humans are less sensitive to hormonal changes. But as men age, their testosterone levels—and their aggressiveness—diminish. Hormonally charged, aggressive 17-year-olds mature into hormonally quieter and gentler 70-year-olds. Also, violent criminals tend to be muscular young males with higher-than-average testosterone levels, lower-than-average intelligence scores, and low levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin (Dabbs et al., 2001a; Pendick, 1994). Men more than women tend to have wide faces, a testosterone-linked trait, rather than roundish or long faces. And men's facial width is a predictor of their aggressiveness (Carré et al., 2009; Stirrat & Perrett, 2010).

High testosterone correlates with irritability, assertiveness, impulsiveness, and low tolerance for frustration—qualities that predispose somewhat more aggressive responses to provocation or competition for status (Dabbs et al., 2001b; Harris, 1999; McAndrew, 2009). Among both teenage boys and adult men, high testosterone levels correlate with delinquency, hard drug use, and aggressive-bullying responses to frustration (Berman et al., 1993; Dabbs & Morris, 1990; Olweus et al., 1988). Drugs that sharply reduce testosterone levels subdue men's aggressive tendencies.

"We could avoid two-thirds of all crime simply by putting all able-bodied young men in cryogenic sleep from the age of 12 through 28." -DAVID T. LYKKEN, *THE ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITIES*, 1995

**A lean, mean fighting machine—the testosterone-laden female hyena** The hyena's unusual embryology pumps testosterone into female fetuses. The result is revved-up young female hyenas who seem born to fight.



Ocean/Corbis

Another drug that sometimes circulates in the bloodstream—alcohol—*unleashes* aggressive responses to frustration. In police data and prison surveys, as in experiments, aggression-prone people are more likely to drink, and they are more likely to become violent when intoxicated (White et al., 1993). People who have been drinking commit 4 in 10 violent crimes and 3 in 4 acts of spousal abuse (Karberg & James, 2005). Alcohol's effects are both biological and psychological (Bushman, 1993; Ito et al., 1996; Taylor & Chermack, 1993). Those who only *think* they've imbibed alcohol will be somewhat affected, but so, too, will those who have had alcohol unknowingly slipped into a drink. Unless people are distracted, alcohol tends to focus their attention on a provocation rather than on inhibitory cues (Giancola & Corman, 2007). Alcohol also inclines people to interpret ambiguous acts (such as a bump in a crowd) as provocations (Bègue et al., 2010).

## Psychological and Social-Cultural Factors in Aggression

**78-2** What psychological and social-cultural factors may trigger aggressive behavior?

Biological factors influence the ease with which aggression is triggered. But what psychological and social-cultural factors pull the trigger?

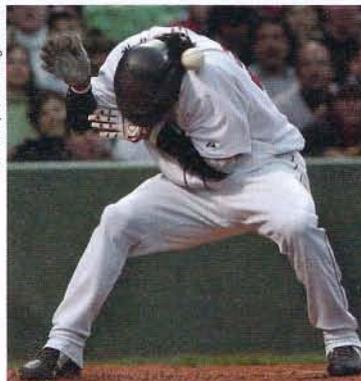
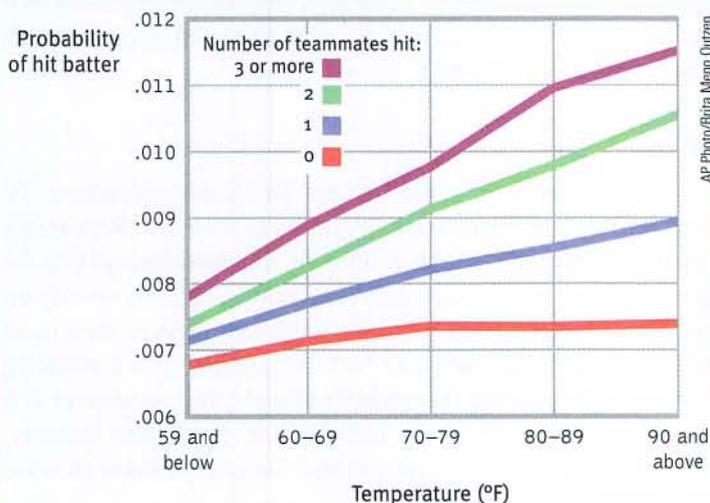
### Aversive Events

Suffering sometimes builds character. In laboratory experiments, however, those made miserable have often made others miserable (Berkowitz, 1983, 1989). This phenomenon is called the **frustration-aggression principle**: Frustration creates anger, which can spark aggression. One analysis of 27,667 hit-by-pitch Major League Baseball incidents between 1960 and 2004 revealed this link (Timmerman, 2007). Pitchers were most likely to hit batters when

- they had been frustrated by the previous batter hitting a home run.
- the current batter had hit a home run the last time at bat.
- a teammate had been hit by a pitch in the previous half-inning.

Other aversive stimuli—hot temperatures, physical pain, personal insults, foul odors, cigarette smoke, crowding, and a host of others—can also evoke hostility. In laboratory experiments, when people get overheated, they think, feel, and act more aggressively. In baseball games, the number of hit batters rises with the temperature (Reifman et al., 1991; see **FIGURE 78.1**). And in the wider world, violent crime and spousal abuse rates have been higher during hotter years, seasons, months, and days (Anderson & Anderson, 1984).

**frustration-aggression principle**  
the principle that frustration—the blocking of an attempt to achieve some goal—creates anger, which can generate aggression.



**Figure 78.1**

### Temperature and retaliation

Richard Larrick and his colleagues (2011) looked for occurrences of batters hit by pitchers during 4,566,468 pitcher-batter matchups across 57,293 Major League Baseball games since 1952. The probability of a hit batter increased if one or more of the pitcher's teammates had been hit, and also with temperature.

From the available data, Craig Anderson and his colleagues (2000; 2011) have projected that, other things being equal, global warming of 4 degrees Fahrenheit (about 2 degrees centigrade) would induce tens of thousands of additional assaults and murders—and that’s before the added violence inducement from climate-change-related drought, poverty, food insecurity, and migration.

### AP® Exam Tip

David Myers points out that this section is an application of material that was introduced in Unit VI. You should go back there for a quick review if you don't recognize the basic components of operant conditioning and observational learning in this material.

## Reinforcement and Modeling

Aggression may be a natural response to aversive events, but learning can alter natural reactions. As Unit VI explained, we learn when our behavior is reinforced, and we learn by watching others.

In situations where experience has taught us that aggression pays, we are likely to act aggressively again. Children whose aggression has successfully intimidated other children may become bullies. Animals that have successfully fought to get food or mates become increasingly ferocious. To foster a kinder, gentler world we had best model and reward sensitivity and cooperation from an early age, perhaps by training parents to discipline without modeling violence.

Parents of delinquent youth frequently cave in to (reward) their children’s tears and temper tantrums. Then, exasperated, they discipline with beatings (Patterson et al., 1982, 1992).

Parent-training programs often advise parents to avoid modeling violence by screaming and hitting. Instead, parents should reinforce desirable behaviors and frame statements positively. (“When you finish loading the dishwasher you can go play,” rather than “If you don’t load the dishwasher, there’ll be no playing.”)

One *aggression-replacement program* worked with juvenile offenders and gang members and their parents. It taught both generations new ways to control anger, and more thoughtful approaches to moral reasoning (Goldstein et al., 1998). The result? The youths’ re-arrest rates dropped.

Different cultures model, reinforce, and evoke different tendencies toward violence. For example, crime rates are higher (and average happiness is lower) in countries marked by a great disparity between rich and poor (Triandis, 1994). In the United States, cultures and families that experience minimal father care also have high violence rates (Triandis, 1994). Even after controlling for parental education, race, income, and teen motherhood, American male youths from father-absent homes have double their peers’ incarceration rate (Harper & McLanahan, 2004).

Violence can also vary by culture within a country. Richard Nisbett and Dov Cohen (1996) analyzed violence among White Americans in southern towns settled by Scots-Irish herders whose tradition emphasized “manly honor,” the use of arms to protect one’s flock, and a history of coercive slavery. Compared with their White counterparts in New England towns settled by the more traditionally peaceful Puritan, Quaker, and Dutch farmer-artisans, the cultural descendants of those herders have triple the homicide rates and are more supportive of physically punishing children, of warfare initiatives, and of uncontrolled gun ownership. “Culture-of-honor” states also have higher rates of students bringing weapons to school and of school shootings (Brown et al., 2009).

## Media Models for Violence

Parents are hardly the only aggression models. In the United States and elsewhere, TV shows, films, video games, and YouTube offer supersized portions of violence. Repeatedly viewing on-screen violence teaches us **social scripts**—culturally provided mental files for how to act. When we find ourselves in new situations, uncertain how to behave, we rely on social scripts. After so many action films, teens may acquire a script that plays in their head when they face real-life conflicts. Challenged, they may “act like a man” by intimidating or eliminating the threat. Likewise, after viewing the multiple sexual innuendoes and acts found in most prime-time TV shows—often involving impulsive or short-term relationships—youths may acquire sexual scripts they later enact in real-life relationships (Kunkel et al., 2001; Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991).

**social script** culturally modeled guide for how to act in various situations.

Music lyrics also write social scripts. In one set of experiments, German university men administered hotter chili sauce to a woman and recalled more negative feelings and beliefs about women after listening to woman-hating song lyrics. Man-hating song lyrics had a similar effect on the aggressive behavior of women listeners (Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006).

Sexual aggression is sometimes modeled in X-rated films and pornography. Content analyses have revealed that most X-rated films depict quick, casual sex between strangers, but sometimes also provide scenes of rape and sexual exploitation of women by men (Cowan et al., 1988; NCTV, 1987; Yang & Linz, 1990). These scenes often include enactments of the *rape myth*—the idea that some women invite or enjoy rape and get “swept away” while being “taken.” (In actuality, rape is traumatic, and it frequently harms women’s reproductive and psychological health [Golding, 1996].) Most rapists accept this myth (Brinson, 1992). So do many men and women who watch a great deal of TV: Compared with those who watch little television, heavy viewers are more accepting of the rape myth (Kahlor & Morrison, 2007). Might sexually explicit media models in the \$97 billion global pornography business contribute to sexually aggressive tendencies (D’Orlando, 2011)?

Most consumers of child and adult pornography commit no known sexual crimes (Seto, 2009). But they are more likely to accept the rape myth as reality (Kingston et al., 2009). Canadian and U.S. sex offenders acknowledge a greater-than-usual appetite for sexually explicit and sexually violent materials—materials typically labeled as pornography (Kingston et al., 2009; Marshall, 1989, 2000; Oddone-Paolucci et al., 2000). The Los Angeles Police Department, for example, reported that pornography was “conspicuously present” in 62 percent of its extrafamilial child sexual abuse cases during the 1980s (Bennett, 1991). High pornography consumption also has predicted greater sexual aggressiveness among university men, even after controlling for other predictors of antisocial behavior (Vega & Malamuth, 2007). But critics object. Since 1990, the reported U.S. rape rate has declined while pornography consumption has increased (Ferguson & Hartley, 2009). And aren’t many sexual aggressors merely, as sex researcher John Money (1988) suspected, using pornography “as an alibi to explain to themselves what otherwise is inexplicable”?

People heavily exposed to televised crime see the world as more dangerous. People heavily exposed to pornography see the world as more sexual. Repeatedly watching X-rated films, even nonviolent films, has many effects (Kingston et al., 2009). One’s own partner seems less attractive (Module 39). Extramarital sex seems less troubling (Zillmann, 1989). A woman’s friendliness seems more sexual. Sexual aggression seems less serious (Harris, 1994; Zillmann, 1989). These effects feed the ingredients of coercion against women.

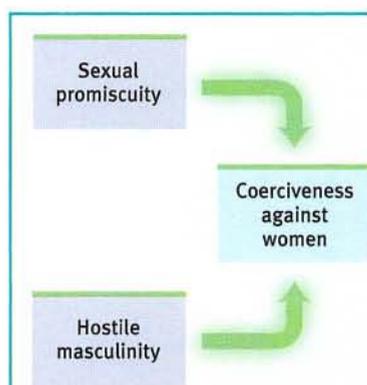
In one experiment, undergraduates viewed six brief, sexually explicit films each week for six weeks (Zillmann & Bryant, 1984). A control group viewed nonerotic films during the same six-week period. Three weeks later, both groups read a newspaper report about a man convicted but not yet sentenced for raping a hitchhiker. When asked to suggest an appropriate prison term, viewers of the sexually explicit films recommended sentences half as long as those recommended by the control group.

Experiments cannot elicit actual sexual violence, but they can assess a man’s willingness to hurt a woman. Often the research gauges the effect of violent versus nonviolent erotic films on men’s willingness to deliver supposed electric shocks to women who had earlier provoked them. These experiments suggest that it’s less the eroticism than the depictions of sexual *violence* (whether in R-rated slasher films or X-rated films) that most directly affect men’s acceptance and performance of aggression against women.

To a lesser extent, nonviolent pornography can also influence aggression. In a series of studies, Nathaniel Lambert and his colleagues (2011) used various methods to explore pornography’s effects on aggression against relationship partners. They found that pornography consumption predicted both self-reported aggression and laboratory noise blasts to their partner, and that abstaining from customary pornography consumption decreased aggression (while abstaining from their favorite food did not).

### AP® Exam Tip

In the experiment described here, can you identify the independent and dependent variables? It’s great practice to do this every time you read about an experiment.



**Figure 78.2**

**Men who sexually coerce women**

The recipe for coercion against women combines an impersonal approach to sex with a hostile masculinity. (Adapted from Malamuth, 1996.)

Neil Malamuth (1996) has shown that sexually coercive men typically are sexually promiscuous and hostile in their relationships with women (**FIGURE 78.2**). Several factors can create a predisposition to sexual violence (Malamuth et al., 1991, 1995). They include media influences but also dominance motives, disinhibition by alcohol, and a history of child abuse. Still, media depictions of violence can disinhibit and desensitize; viewing sexual violence fosters hostile, domineering attitudes and behaviors; and viewing pornography leads viewers to trivialize rape, devalue their partners, and engage in uncommitted sex. Media influence is not a minor issue.

Might public consciousness be raised by making people aware of the information you have just been reading? In the 1940s, movies often depicted African-Americans as childlike, superstitious buffoons, images we would not tolerate today. Many hope that entertainers, producers, and audiences might someday look back with embarrassment on the days when movies “entertained” us with scenes of sexual coercion, torture, and mutilation.

### Do Violent Video Games Teach Social Scripts for Violence?

Violent video games became an issue for public debate after teenagers in more than a dozen places seemed to mimic the carnage in the shooter games they had so often played (Anderson, 2004a). In 2002, two Grand Rapids, Michigan, teens and a man in his early twenties spent part of a night drinking beer and playing *Grand Theft Auto III*. Using simulated cars, they ran down pedestrians, then beat them with fists, leaving a bloody body behind (Kolker, 2002). The same teens and man then went out for a real drive. Spotting a 38-year-old man on a bicycle, they ran him down with their car, got out, stomped and punched him, and returned home to play the game some more. (The victim, a father of three, died six days later.)

As we noted in Module 30, observing media violence tends to desensitize people to cruelty and prime them to respond aggressively when provoked. Does this violence-viewing effect extend to playing violent video games? Should parents worry about the ways actively role-playing aggression will affect their children? Experiments indicate that playing positive games has positive effects. For example, playing *Lemmings*, where a goal is to help others, increases real-life helping (Greitemeyer & Osswald, 2010). So, might a parallel effect occur after playing games that enact violence?

When combining data from 400 studies with 130,296 participants, Craig Anderson and his colleagues (2010) found such an effect: Playing violent video games increased aggression. The finding held for youth and for young adults; in North America, Japan, and Western Europe; and with each of three major research designs (correlational, experimental, and longitudinal). In a 2010 statement submitted for a U.S. Supreme Court case, Anderson was joined by more than 100 social scientists in explaining that “the psychological processes underlying such effects are well understood and include: imitation; observational learning; priming of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral scripts; physiological arousal; and emotional desensitization.”

Consider some evidence:

- University men who spent the most hours playing violent video games tended to be the most physically aggressive (for example, more likely to acknowledge having hit or attacked someone else) (Anderson & Dill, 2000).
- People randomly assigned to play a game involving bloody murders with groaning victims (rather than to play nonviolent *Myst*) became more hostile. On a follow-up task, they also were more likely to blast intense noise at a fellow student.
- People with extensive experience in violent video gaming display desensitization to violence, as shown by blunted brain responses; they also are less likely to help an injured victim (Bartholow et al., 2006; Bushman & Anderson, 2009).
- After playing a violent rather than a neutral or prosocial video game, people become more likely to express dehumanized perceptions of immigrant outgroups (Greitemeyer & McLatchie, 2011).



**Coincidence or cause?** In 2011, Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik bombed government buildings in Oslo, and then went to a youth camp where he shot and killed 69 people, mostly teens. As a player of first-person shooter games, Breivik stirred debate when he commented that “I see *MW2* [*Modern Warfare 2*] more as a part of my training-simulation than anything else.” Did his violent game playing contribute to his violence, or was it a mere coincidental association? To explore such questions, psychologists experiment.

Young adolescents who play a lot of violent video games see the world as more hostile. Compared with nongaming kids, they get into more arguments and fights and get worse grades (Gentile, 2009). Ah, but is this merely because naturally hostile kids are drawn to such games? Apparently not. Comparisons of gamers and nongamers who scored low in hostility revealed a difference in the number of reported fights: 38 percent of the violent-game players had been in fights, versus only 4 percent of the nongamers. Over time, the nongamers became more likely to have fights only if they started playing the violent games (Anderson, 2004a). Another study, with German adolescents, found that today's violent game playing predicts future aggression, but today's aggression does not predict future game playing (Möller & Krahé, 2008). Some researchers believe that, due partly to the more active participation and rewarded violence of game play, violent video games have even greater effects on aggressive behavior and cognition than do violent TV shows and movies (Anderson et al., 2007). The effects of violent gaming, some say, are comparable to the toxic effects of asbestos or second-hand smoke exposure (Bushman et al., 2010). "Playing violent video games probably will not turn your child into a psychopathic killer," acknowledges researcher Brad Bushman (2011), "but I would want to know how the child treats his or her parents, how they treat their siblings, how much compassion they have."

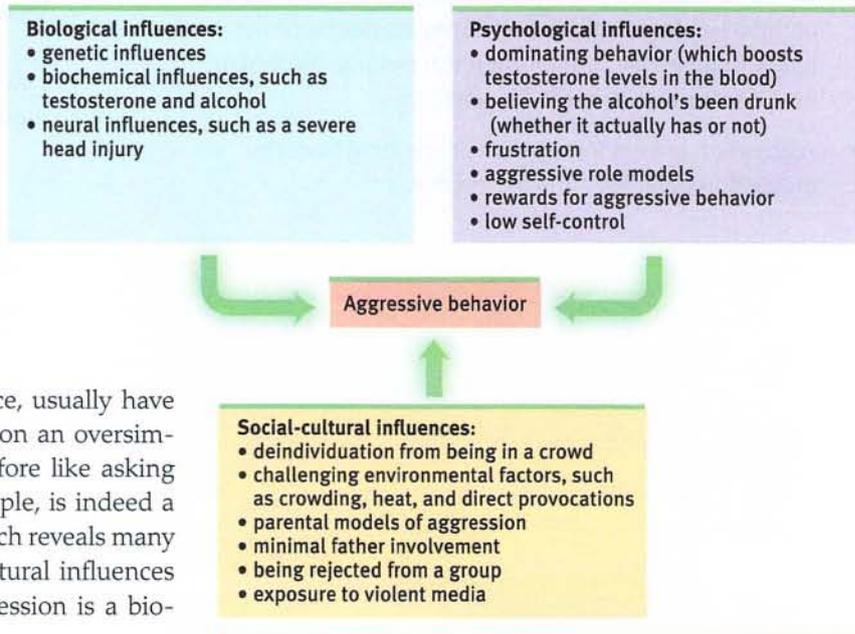
Others are unimpressed by violent-game-effect findings (Ferguson & Kilburn, 2010). They note that from 1996 to 2006, youth violence was declining while video game sales were increasing. Moreover, some point out that avid game players are quick and sharp: they develop speedy reaction times and enhanced visual skills (Dye et al., 2009; Green et al., 2010). The focused fun of game playing can satisfy basic needs for a sense of competence, control, and social connection (Przbylski et al., 2010). That helps explain why, in one experiment, elementary school boys randomly selected to receive a game system spent enormous amounts of time on it over the next four months, with diminished time spent on schoolwork and with more academic problems (Weis & Cerankosky, 2010).

This much seems clear. Aggressive thoughts can lead to violent behavior and role playing can increase aggressive thoughts and emotions. As the Greek philosopher Aristotle observed, "We are what we repeatedly do."

Nevertheless, a 2011 Supreme Court decision overturned a California state law that banned violent video game sales to children (much like the ban on sales of sexually explicit materials to children). The First Amendment's free speech guarantee protects even offensive games, said the court's majority, which was unpersuaded by the evidence of harm. But the debate goes on. "What sense does it make to forbid selling to a 13-year-old a magazine with an image of a nude woman," wrote Justice Stephen Breyer, in a dissenting opinion, "while protecting the sale to that 13-year-old of an interactive video game in which he actively, but virtually, binds and gags the woman, then tortures and kills her?"

\*\*\*

To sum up, significant behaviors, such as violence, usually have many determinants, making any single explanation an oversimplification. Asking what causes violence is therefore like asking what causes cancer. Asbestos exposure, for example, is indeed a cancer cause, albeit only one among many. Research reveals many different biological, psychological, and social-cultural influences on aggressive behavior. Like so much else, aggression is a biopsychosocial phenomenon (**FIGURE 78.3**).



**Figure 78.3**

**Biopsychosocial understanding of aggression**

Because many factors contribute to aggressive behavior, there are many ways to change such behavior, including learning anger management and communication skills, and avoiding violent media and video games.

It is also important to note that many people are leading gentle, even heroic lives amid personal and social stresses, reminding us again that individuals differ. The person matters. That people vary over time and place reminds us that environments also differ. Yesterday's plundering Vikings have become today's peace-promoting Scandinavians. Situations matter. Like all behavior, aggression arises from the interaction of persons and situations.

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

Do you think there should be laws to prevent children's exposure to violent media? Why or why not?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

What psychological, biological, and social-cultural influences interact to produce aggressive behaviors?

*Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.*

## Module 78 Review

**78-1**

How does psychology's definition of *aggression* differ from everyday usage? What biological factors make us more prone to hurt one another?

- In psychology, *aggression* is any physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy.
- Biology influences our threshold for aggressive behaviors at three levels: genetic (inherited traits), neural (activity in key brain areas), and biochemical (such as alcohol or excess testosterone in the bloodstream).
- Aggression is a complex behavior resulting from the interaction of biology and experience.

**78-2**

What psychological and social-cultural factors may trigger aggressive behavior?

- Frustration (*frustration-aggression principle*), previous reinforcement for aggressive behavior, and observing an aggressive role model can all contribute to aggression.
  - Media portrayals of violence provide *social scripts* that children learn to follow.
  - Viewing sexual violence contributes to greater aggression toward women.
  - Playing violent video games increases aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. A friend fails to meet an achievement goal. As a result, he gets angry and behaves aggressively. Which of the following terms best identifies this chain of events?
  - a. Aggression
  - b. Fundamental attribution error
  - c. Frustration-aggression principle
  - d. Social scripts
  - e. Biopsychosocial hypothesis
2. What do we call culturally modeled guides for how to act in various situations?
  - a. Aggressive behavior
  - b. Cultures of honor
  - c. Reinforcement modeling
  - d. Social scripts
  - e. Social-cultural influences
3. Which of the following is an example of a social-cultural influence on aggressive behavior?
  - a. Exposure to violent media
  - b. Frustration
  - c. Testosterone
  - d. Believing you've drunk alcohol
  - e. Genetics

## Practice FRQs

1. Using the biopsychosocial model, give a biological influence, social-cultural influence, and a psychological influence on aggressive behavior.
2. Define social scripts and the frustration-aggression principle. Then, provide an example of each.

**(4 points)**

### Answer

**1 point:** Biological: genetics, biochemicals (for example, testosterone), or neural (for example, severe frontal lobe injury).

**1 point:** Social-cultural: exposure to violent media, rejection from a group, or parental models of aggression.

**1 point:** Psychological: frustration, aggressive role models, or rewards for aggressive behavior.

# Module 79

## Attraction

### Module Learning Objectives

79-1

Explain why we befriend or fall in love with some people but not others.

79-2

Describe how romantic love typically changes as time passes.



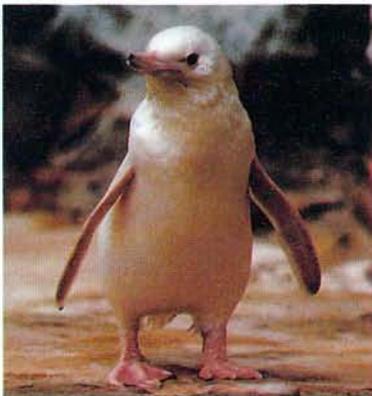
#### mere exposure effect

the phenomenon that repeated exposure to novel stimuli increases liking of them.

#### AP® Exam Tip

Can you remember the other use of the term *proximity* earlier in the course? It's one of the Gestalt principles from Unit IV, Sensation and Perception.

Rex USA



#### Familiarity breeds acceptance

When this rare white penguin was born in the Sydney, Australia, zoo, his tuxedoed peers ostracized him. Zookeepers thought they would need to dye him black to gain acceptance. But after three weeks of contact, the other penguins came to accept him.

Pause a moment and think about your relationships with two people—a close friend, and someone who has stirred your feelings of romantic love. What psychological chemistry binds us together in these special sorts of attachments that help us cope with all other relationships? Social psychology suggests some answers.

## The Psychology of Attraction

79-1

Why do we befriend or fall in love with some people but not others?

We endlessly wonder how we can win others' affection and what makes our own affections flourish or fade. Does familiarity breed contempt, or does it intensify affection? Do birds of a feather flock together, or do opposites attract? Is beauty only skin deep, or does attractiveness matter greatly? To explore these questions, let's consider three ingredients of our liking for one another: proximity, attractiveness, and similarity.

### Proximity

Before friendships become close, they must begin. *Proximity*—geographic nearness—is friendship's most powerful predictor. Proximity provides opportunities for aggression, but much more often it breeds liking. Study after study reveals that people are most inclined to like, and even to marry, those who live in the same neighborhood, who sit nearby in class, who work in the same office, who share the same parking lot, who eat in the same cafeteria. Look around. Mating starts with meeting. (For more on modern ways to connect people, see Close-up: Online Matchmaking and Speed Dating.)

Proximity breeds liking partly because of the **mere exposure effect**. Repeated exposure to novel stimuli increases our liking for them. This applies to nonsense syllables, musical selections, geometric figures, Chinese characters, human faces, and the letters of our own name (Moreland & Zajonc, 1982; Nuttin, 1987; Zajonc, 2001). We are even somewhat more likely to marry someone whose first or last name resembles our own (Jones et al., 2004).

So, within certain limits, familiarity breeds fondness (Bornstein, 1989, 1999). Researchers demonstrated this by having four equally attractive women silently attend a

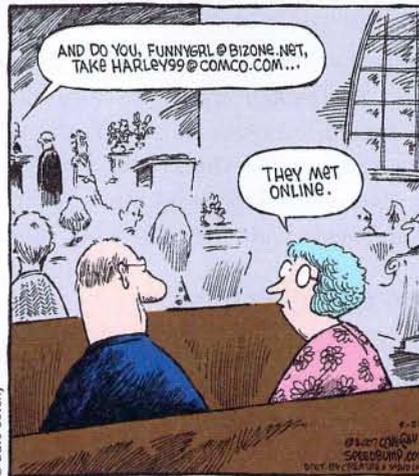
## Close-up

## Online Matchmaking and Speed Dating

Those who have not found a romantic partner in their immediate proximity may cast a wider net by joining the estimated 30 million people who each year try one of the some 1500 online dating services (Ellin, 2009). Online matchmaking works mostly by expanding the pool of potential mates (Finkel et al., 2012a,b).

Although published research on the effectiveness of Internet matchmaking services is sparse, this much seems well established: Some people, including occasional predators, dishonestly represent their age, attractiveness, occupation, or other details, and thus are not who they seem to be. Nevertheless, Katelyn McKenna and John Bargh and their colleagues have offered a surprising finding: Compared with relationships formed in person, Internet-formed friendships and romantic relationships have been, on average, more likely to last beyond two years (Bargh et al. 2002, 2004; McKenna & Bargh, 1998, 2000; McKenna et al., 2002). In one of their studies, people disclosed more, with less posturing, to those whom they met online. When conversing online with someone for 20 minutes, they felt more liking for that person than they did for someone they had met and talked with face to face. This was true even when (unknown to them) it was the same person! Internet friendships often feel as real and important to people as in-person relationships. That helps explain why one-third of American marriages occur among partners who met online, and why those marriages are slightly more stable and satisfying than marriages that began offline (Cacioppo et al., 2013).

*Speed dating* pushes the search for romance into high gear. In a process pioneered by a matchmaking Jewish rabbi,



people meet a succession of prospective partners, either in person or via webcam (Bower, 2009). After a 3- to 8-minute conversation, people move on to the next person. (In an in-person meeting, one partner—usually the woman—remains seated and the other circulates.) Those who want to meet again can arrange for future contacts. For many participants, 4 minutes is enough time to form a feeling about a conversational partner and to register whether the partner likes them (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008a,b).

Researchers have quickly realized that speed dating offers a unique opportunity

for studying influences on our first impressions of potential romantic partners. Among recent findings are these:

- Men are more transparent. Observers (male or female) watching videos of speed-dating encounters can read a man's level of romantic interest more accurately than a woman's (Place et al., 2009).
- Given more options, people's choices become more superficial. Meeting lots of potential partners leads people to focus on more easily assessed characteristics, such as height and weight (Lenton & Francesconi, 2010). This was true even when researchers controlled for time spent with each partner.
- Men wish for future contact with more of their speed dates; women tend to be more choosy. But this gender difference disappears if the conventional roles are reversed, so that men stay seated while women circulate (Finkel & Eastwick, 2009).

200-student class for zero, 5, 10, or 15 class sessions (Moreland & Beach, 1992). At the end of the course, students were shown slides of each woman and asked to rate her attractiveness. The most attractive? The ones they'd seen most often. The phenomenon would come as no surprise to the young Taiwanese man who wrote more than 700 letters to his girlfriend, urging her to marry him. She did marry—the mail carrier (Steinberg, 1993).

No face is more familiar than your own. And that helps explain an interesting finding by Lisa DeBruine (2004): We like other people when their faces incorporate some morphed features of our own. When DeBruine (2002) had

**The mere exposure effect**

The mere exposure effect applies even to ourselves. Because the human face is not perfectly symmetrical, the face we see in the mirror is not the same face our friends see. Most of us prefer the familiar mirror image, while our friends like the reverse (Mita et al., 1977). The Maggie Smith (actor) known to her fans is at left. The person she sees in the mirror each morning is shown at right, and that's the photo she would probably prefer.

AP Photo/Herman Miller



**Beauty grows with mere exposure** Herman Miller, Inc.'s famed Aeron chair initially received high comfort ratings but abysmal beauty ratings. To some it looked like "lawn furniture" or "a giant prehistoric insect" (Gladwell, 2005). But then, with design awards, media visibility, and imitators, the ugly duckling came to be the company's best-selling chair ever and to be seen as beautiful. With people, too, beauty lies partly in the beholder's eye and can grow with exposure.

"Personal beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of introduction." -ARISTOTLE, *APOTHEGEMS*, 330 B.C.E.

### FYI

Percentage of Men and Women Who "Constantly Think About Their Looks"

	Men	Women
Canada	18%	20%
United States	17	27
Mexico	40	45
Venezuela	47	65

From Roper Starch survey, reported by McCool (1999).

McMaster University students (both men and women) play a game with a supposed other player, they were more trusting and cooperative when the other person's image had some of their own facial features morphed into it. In me I trust.

For our ancestors, the mere exposure effect had survival value. What was familiar was generally safe and approachable. What was unfamiliar was more often dangerous and threatening. Evolution may therefore have hard-wired into us the tendency to bond with those who are familiar and to be wary of those who are unfamiliar (Zajonc, 1998). If so, gut-level prejudice against those who are culturally different could be a primitive, automatic emotional response (Devine, 1995). It's what we do with our knee-jerk prejudice that matters, say researchers. Do we let those feelings control our behavior? Or do we monitor our feelings and act in ways that reflect our conscious valuing of human equality?

## Physical Attractiveness

Once proximity affords us contact, what most affects our first impressions? The person's sincerity? Intelligence? Personality? Hundreds of experiments reveal that it is something far more superficial: physical appearance. This finding is unnerving for most of us who were taught that "beauty is only skin deep" and that "appearances can be deceiving."

In one early study, researchers randomly matched new University of Minnesota students for a Welcome Week dance (Walster et al., 1966). Before the dance, the researchers gave each student a battery of personality and aptitude tests, and they rated each student's level of physical attractiveness. On the night of the blind date, the couples danced and talked for more than two hours and then took a brief intermission to rate their dates. What determined whether they liked each other? Only one thing seemed to matter: appearance. Both the men and the women liked good-looking dates best. Women are more likely than men to say that another's looks don't affect them (Lippa, 2007). But studies show that a man's looks do affect women's behavior (Feingold, 1990; Sprecher, 1989; Woll, 1986). Speed-dating experiments confirm that attractiveness influences first impressions for both sexes (Belot & Francesconi, 2006; Finkel & Eastwick, 2008).

Physical attractiveness also predicts how often people date and how popular they feel. It affects initial impressions of people's personalities. We don't assume that attractive people are more compassionate, but we do perceive them as healthier, happier, more sensitive, more successful, and more socially skilled (Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1992; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). Attractive, well-dressed people are more likely to make a favorable impression on potential employers, and they tend to be more successful in their jobs (Cash & Janda, 1984; Langlois et al., 2000; Solomon, 1987). Income analyses show a penalty for plainness or obesity and a premium for beauty (Engemann & Owyang, 2005).

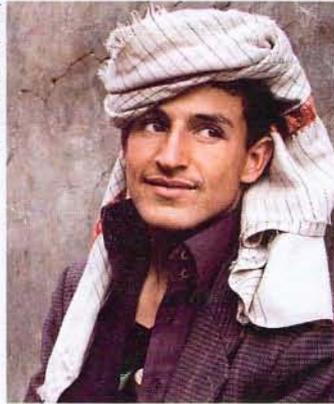
An analysis of 100 top-grossing films since 1940 found that attractive characters were portrayed as morally superior to unattractive characters (Smith et al., 1999). But Hollywood modeling doesn't explain why, to judge from their gazing times, even babies prefer attractive over unattractive faces (Langlois et al., 1987). So do some blind people, as University of Birmingham professor John Hull (1990, p. 23) discovered after going blind. A colleague's remarks on a woman's beauty would strangely affect his feelings. He found this "deplorable. . . . What can it matter to me what sighted men think of women . . . yet I do care what sighted men think, and I do not seem able to throw off this prejudice."

For those who find importance of looks unfair and unenlightened, two attractiveness findings may be reassuring. First, people's attractiveness is surprisingly unrelated to their self-esteem and happiness (Diener et al., 1995; Major et al., 1984). Unless we have just compared ourselves with superattractive people, few of us (thanks, perhaps, to the mere exposure effect) view ourselves as unattractive (Thornton & Moore, 1993). Second, strikingly attractive people are sometimes suspicious that praise for their work may simply be a reaction to their looks. Less attractive people are more likely to accept praise as sincere (Berscheid, 1981).

© SCPHOTOS/Alamy



© Michele Falzone/Alamy



Caterina Bernardi/Corbis

**In the eye of the beholder**

Conceptions of attractiveness vary by culture. Yet some adult physical features, such as a youthful form and face, seem attractive everywhere.

Beauty is in the eye of the culture. Hoping to look attractive, people across the globe have pierced their noses, lengthened their necks, bound their feet, and dyed or painted their skin and hair. They have gorged themselves to achieve a full figure or liposuctioned fat to achieve a slim one, applied chemicals hoping to rid themselves of unwanted hair or to regrow wanted hair, strapped on leather garments to make their breasts seem smaller or surgically filled their breasts with silicone and put on Wonderbras to make them look bigger. Cultural ideals also change over time. For women in North America, the ultra-thin ideal of the Roaring Twenties gave way to the soft, voluptuous Marilyn Monroe ideal of the 1950s, only to be replaced by today's lean yet busty ideal.

If we're not born attractive, we may try to buy beauty. Americans now spend more on beauty supplies than on education and social services combined. Still not satisfied, millions undergo plastic surgery, teeth capping and whitening, Botox skin smoothing, and laser hair removal (ASPS, 2010).

Some aspects of attractiveness, however, do cross place and time (Cunningham et al., 2005; Langlois et al., 2000). By providing reproductive clues, bodies influence sexual attraction. As evolutionary psychologists explain (Module 15), men in many cultures, from Australia to Zambia, judge women as more attractive if they have a youthful, fertile appearance, suggested by a low waist-to-hip ratio (Karremans et al., 2010; Perilloux et al., 2010; Platek & Singh, 2010). Women feel attracted to healthy-looking men, but especially—and the more so when ovulating—to those who seem mature, dominant, masculine, and affluent (Gallup & Frederick, 2010; Gangestad et al., 2010). But faces matter, too. When people separately rate opposite-sex faces and bodies, the face tends to be the better predictor of overall physical attractiveness (Currie & Little, 2009; Peters et al., 2007).

People everywhere also seem to prefer physical features—noses, legs, physiques—that are neither unusually large nor small. An averaged face is attractive (**FIGURE 79.1**). In one clever demonstration, researchers digitized the faces of up to 32 college students and used a computer to average them (Langlois & Roggman, 1990). Students

**FYI**

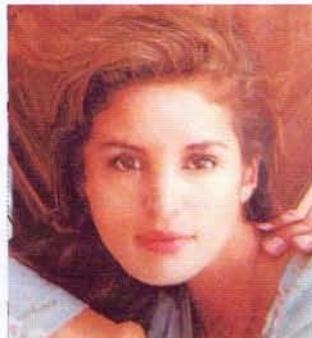
*New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd on liposuction (January 19, 2000): "Women in the 50's vacuumed. Women in the 00's are vacuumed. Our Hoovers have turned on us!"

**FYI**

Women have 91 percent of cosmetic procedures (ASPS, 2010). Women also recall others' appearance better than do men (Mast & Hall, 2006).

**Figure 79.1**

**Average is attractive** Which of these faces offered by University of St. Andrews psychologist David Perrett (2002, 2010) is most attractive? Most people say it's the face on the right—of a nonexistent person that is the average composite of these 3 plus 57 other actual faces.

David Perrett/  
University of St. Andrews

**Extreme makeover** Greater wealth and concerns about appearance in China have led to increasing numbers of women seeking to alter their appearance. This woman underwent six months of grueling plastic surgery to transform her eyes, nose, chin, breasts, abdomen, bottom, legs, and skin in hopes of obtaining a career in film.



judged the averaged, composite faces as more attractive than 96 percent of the individual faces. One reason is that averaged faces are symmetrical, and people with symmetrical faces and bodies are more sexually attractive (Rhodes et al., 1999; Singh, 1995; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1994). Merge either half of your face with its mirror image and your symmetrical new face would boost your attractiveness a notch.

Our feelings also influence our attractiveness judgments. Imagine two people. The first is honest, humorous, and polite. The second is rude, unfair, and abusive. Which one is more attractive? Most people perceive the person with the appealing traits as also more physically attractive (Lewandowski et al., 2007). Those we like we find attractive. In a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, Prince Charming asks Cinderella, “Do I love you because you’re beautiful, or are you beautiful because I love you?” Chances are it’s both. As we see our loved ones again and again, their physical imperfections grow less noticeable and their attractiveness grows more apparent (Beaman & Klentz, 1983; Gross & Crofton, 1977). Shakespeare said it in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: “Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind.” Come to love someone and watch beauty grow.

## Similarity

So proximity has brought you into contact with someone, and your appearance has made an acceptable first impression. What now influences whether you will become friends? As you get to know each other better, will the chemistry be better if you are opposites or if you are alike?

It makes a good story—extremely different types living in harmonious union: Rat, Mole, and Badger in *The Wind in the Willows*, Frog and Toad in Arnold Lobel’s books. The stories delight us by expressing what we seldom experience, for in real life, opposites *retract* (Rosenbaum, 1986). Compared with randomly paired people, friends and couples are far more likely to share common attitudes, beliefs, and interests (and, for that matter, age, religion, race, education, intelligence, smoking behavior, and economic status).

Moreover, the more alike people are, the more their liking endures (Byrne, 1971). Journalist Walter Lippmann was right to suppose that love lasts “when the lovers love many things together, and not merely each other.” Similarity breeds content. Dissimilarity often fosters disfavor, which helps explain many straight men’s disapproval of gay men who are doubly dissimilar from themselves in sexual orientation and gender roles (Lehavot & Lambert, 2007).

Proximity, attractiveness, and similarity are not the only determinants of attraction. We also like those who like us. This is especially so when our self-image is low. When we believe someone likes us, we feel good and respond to them warmly, which leads them to like us even more (Curtis & Miller, 1986). To be liked is powerfully rewarding.

Indeed, all the findings we have considered so far can be explained by a simple *reward theory of attraction*: We will like those whose behavior is rewarding to us, and we will continue relationships that offer more rewards than costs. When people live or work in close proximity with us, it costs less time and effort to develop the friendship and enjoy its benefits. When people are attractive, they are aesthetically pleasing, and associating with them can be socially rewarding. When people share our views, they reward us by validating our own.

## Romantic Love

### 79-2 How does romantic love typically change as time passes?

Sometimes people move quickly from initial impressions, to friendship, to the more intense, complex, and mysterious state of romantic love. If love endures, temporary passionate love will mellow into a lingering companionate love (Hatfield, 1988).

### Passionate Love

A key ingredient of **passionate love** is arousal. The two-factor theory of emotion (Module 41) can help us understand this intense positive absorption in another (Hatfield, 1988). That theory assumes that:

- Emotions have two ingredients—*physical arousal plus cognitive appraisal*.
- Arousal from any source can enhance one emotion or another, depending on how we interpret and label the arousal.

In tests of the two-factor theory, college men have been aroused by fright, by running in place, by viewing erotic materials, or by listening to humorous or repulsive monologues. They were then introduced to an attractive woman and asked to rate her (or their girlfriend). Unlike unaroused men, the stirred-up men attributed some of their arousal to the woman or girlfriend, and felt more attracted to her (Carducci et al., 1978; Dermer & Pyszczynski, 1978; White & Kight, 1984).

A sample experiment: Researchers studied people crossing two bridges above British Columbia's rocky Capilano River (Dutton & Aron, 1974, 1989). One, a swaying footbridge, was 230 feet above the rocks; the other was low and solid. The researchers had an attractive young woman intercept men coming off each bridge, and ask their help in filling out a short questionnaire. She then offered her phone number in case they wanted to hear more about her project. Far more of those who had just crossed the high bridge—which left their hearts pounding—accepted the number and later called the woman. To be revved up and to associate some of that arousal with a desirable person is to feel the pull of passion. Adrenaline makes the heart grow fonder. And when sexual desire is supplemented by a growing attachment, the result is the passion of romantic love (Berscheid, 2010).

### Companionate Love

Although the desire and attachment of romantic love often endure, the intense absorption in the other, the thrill of the romance, the giddy “floating on a cloud” feelings typically fade. Does this mean the French are correct in saying that “love makes the time pass and time makes love pass”? Or can friendship and commitment keep a relationship going after the passion cools?

The evidence indicates that, as love matures, it becomes a steadier **companionate love**—a deep, affectionate attachment (Hatfield, 1988). The flood of passion-facilitating hormones (testosterone, dopamine, adrenaline) subsides and another hormone, oxytocin, supports feelings of trust, calmness, and bonding with the mate. In the most satisfying of marriages, attraction and sexual desire endure, minus the obsession of early stage romance (Acevedo & Aron, 2009).

There may be adaptive wisdom to the shift from passion to attachment (Reis & Aron, 2008). Passionate love often produces children, whose survival is aided by the parents' waning obsession with each other. Failure to appreciate passionate love's limited half-life can doom a relationship (Berscheid et al., 1984). Indeed, recognizing the short duration of obsessive passionate love, some societies deem such feelings to be an irrational reason for marrying. Better, they say, to choose (or have someone choose for you) a partner with a compatible background and interests. Non-Western cultures, where people rate love less important for marriage, do have lower divorce rates (Levine et al., 1995).

Snapshots at [jasonlove.com](http://jasonlove.com)



Bill looked at Susan, Susan at Bill. Suddenly death didn't seem like an option. This was love at first sight.

### FYI

Note the difference between lust (immediate desire) and romantic love (desire + attachment).

**passionate love** an aroused state of intense positive absorption in another, usually present at the beginning of a love relationship.

**companionate love** the deep affectionate attachment we feel for those with whom our lives are intertwined.

“When two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting condition continuously until death do them part.” —GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, “GETTING MARRIED,” 1908

## HI &amp; LOIS



One key to a gratifying and enduring relationship is **equity**. When equity exists—when both partners receive in proportion to what they give—their chances for sustained and satisfying companionate love are good (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990). In one national survey, “sharing household chores” ranked third, after “faithfulness” and a “happy sexual relationship,” on a list of nine things people associated with successful marriages. “I like hugs. I like kisses. But what I really love is help with the dishes,” summarized the Pew Research Center (2007).

Equity’s importance extends beyond marriage. Mutually sharing self and possessions, making decisions together, giving and getting emotional support, promoting and caring about each other’s welfare—all of these acts are at the core of every type of loving relationship (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984). It’s true for lovers, for parent and child, and for intimate friends.

Another vital ingredient of loving relationships is **self-disclosure**, the revealing of intimate details about ourselves—our likes and dislikes, our dreams and worries, our proud and shameful moments. “When I am with my friend,” noted the Roman statesman Seneca, “me thinks I am alone, and as much at liberty to speak anything as to think it.” Self-disclosure breeds liking, and liking breeds self-disclosure (Collins & Miller, 1994). As one person reveals a little, the other reciprocates, the first then reveals more, and on and on, as friends or lovers move to deeper and deeper intimacy (Baumeister & Bratslavsky, 1999).

One experiment marched student pairs through 45 minutes of increasingly self-disclosing conversation—from “When did you last sing to yourself?” to “When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?” Others spent the time with small-talk questions, such as “What was your high school like?” (Aron et al., 1997). By the experiment’s end, those experiencing the escalating intimacy felt remarkably close to their conversation partner, much closer than did the small-talkers.

Intimacy can also grow from pausing to ponder and write our feelings. In another study, researchers invited one person from each of 86 dating couples to spend 20 minutes a day over three days either writing their deepest thoughts and feelings about the relationship or writing merely about their daily activities (Slatcher & Pennebaker, 2006). Those who had written about their feelings expressed more emotion in their instant messages with their partners in the days following, and 77 percent were still dating three months later (compared with 52 percent of those who had written about their activities).

In addition to equity and self-disclosure, a third key to enduring love is *positive support*. While relationship conflicts are inevitable, we can ask ourselves whether our communications more often express sarcasm or support, scorn or sympathy, sneers or smiles. For unhappy couples,

**equity** a condition in which people receive from a relationship in proportion to what they give to it.

**self-disclosure** revealing intimate aspects of oneself to others.



AP Photo/Archaeological Society SAP, Inc.

**Love is an ancient thing** In 2007, a 5000- to 6000-year-old “Romeo and Juliet” young couple was unearthed locked in embrace, near Rome.

disagreements, criticisms, and put downs are routine. For happy couples in enduring relationships, positive interactions (compliments, touches, laughing) outnumber negative interactions (sarcasm, disapproval, insults) by at least 5 to 1 (Gottman, 2007; see also Sullivan et al., 2010).

In the mathematics of love, self-disclosing intimacy + mutually supportive equity = enduring companionate love.

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

When you think of some of the older couples you know, which ones seem to experience companionate love? How do you think they've achieved it?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

How does being physically attractive influence others' perceptions?

Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.

## Module 79 Review

**79-1**

Why do we befriend or fall in love with some people but not others?

- Proximity (geographical nearness) increases liking, in part because of the *mere exposure effect*—exposure to novel stimuli increases liking of those stimuli.
- Physical attractiveness increases social opportunities and improves the way we are perceived.
- Similarity of attitudes and interests greatly increases liking, especially as relationships develop. We also like those who like us.

**79-2**

How does romantic love typically change as time passes?

- Intimate love relationships start with *passionate love*—an intensely aroused state.
- Over time, the strong affection of *companionate love* may develop, especially if enhanced by an *equitable* relationship and by intimate *self-disclosure*.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- Which of the following terms describes our geographic nearness to another person?
  - Mere exposure effect
  - Proximity
  - Similarity
  - Ingroup bias
  - Symmetry
- Which of the following is an example of the mere exposure effect?
  - Adrianna has started arriving tardy to her second period class to avoid a group of kids in the hall who constantly tease her.
  - Abe has biked the same route to school so many times that he no longer has to think about where to turn.
  - Daiyu has seen the same toothpaste ad on television a hundred times. Each time she sees it she hates it more.
  - Abdul has always loved dogs, so he adopted one from the local shelter.
  - Guiren didn't like sushi the first couple times he tried it, but his friend encouraged him to keep eating it and now it's one of his favorite foods.
- Which of the following is an aspect of physical attractiveness that appears to be true across cultures?
  - Indications of reproductive health
  - Height
  - Weight
  - Size of the ears
  - Shape of the chin
- Over time, which of the following is typically true of the relationship between passionate love and companionate love?
  - Passionate and companionate love both decrease.
  - Passionate love increases and companionate love decreases.
  - Passionate and companionate love both increase.
  - Passionate love decreases and companionate love increases.
  - There is no consistent relationship between the levels of passionate love and companionate love.

## Practice FRQs

- List the three major factors that influence attraction.

### Answer

**1 point:** Proximity, which is geographic nearness.

**1 point:** Physical attractiveness.

**1 point:** Similarity.

- Describe one key factor present in passionate love and two key factors present in companionate love.

**(3 points)**

# Module 80

## Altruism, Conflict, and Peacemaking

### Module Learning Objectives

- 80-1** Identify the times when people are most—and least—likely to help.
- 80-2** Discuss how social exchange theory and social norms explain helping behavior.
- 80-3** Explain how social traps and mirror-image perceptions fuel social conflict.
- 80-4** Discuss how we can transform feelings of prejudice, aggression, and conflict into attitudes that promote peace.



### Altruism

- 80-1** When are people most—and least—likely to help?

**Altruism** is an unselfish concern for the welfare of others. In rescuing his jailer, Dirk Willems exemplified altruism (Unit XIV opener). So also did Carl Wilkens and Paul Rusesabagina in Kigali, Rwanda. Wilkens, a Seventh Day Adventist missionary, was living there in 1994 with his family when Hutu militia began to slaughter the Tutsi. The U.S. government, church leaders, and friends all implored Wilkens to leave. He refused. After evacuating his family, and even after every other American had left Kigali, he alone stayed and contested the 800,000-person genocide. When the militia came to kill him and his Tutsi servants, Wilkens' Hutu neighbors deterred them. Despite repeated death threats, he spent his days running roadblocks to take food and water to orphanages and to negotiate, plead, and bully his way through the bloodshed, saving lives time and again. "It just seemed the right thing to do," he later explained (Kristof, 2004).

Elsewhere in Kigali, Rusesabagina, a Hutu married to a Tutsi and the acting manager of a luxury hotel, was sheltering more than 1200 terrified Tutsis and moderate Hutus. When international peacekeepers abandoned the city and hostile militia threatened his guests in the "Hotel Rwanda" (as it came to be called in a 2004 movie), the courageous Rusesabagina began cashing in past favors. He bribed the militia and telephoned influential people abroad to exert pressure on local authorities, thereby sparing the lives of the hotel's occupants from the surrounding chaos.

Both Wilkens and Rusesabagina were displaying altruism. Altruism became a major concern of social psychologists after an especially vile act of sexual violence. On March 13, 1964, a stalker repeatedly stabbed Kitty Genovese, then raped her as she lay dying outside her Queens, New York, apartment at 3:30 A.M. "Oh, my God, he stabbed me!"

**altruism** unselfish regard for the welfare of others.

"Probably no single incident has caused social psychologists to pay as much attention to an aspect of social behavior as Kitty Genovese's murder." -R. LANCE SHOTLAND (1984)

Genovese screamed into the early morning stillness. “Please help me!” Windows opened and lights went on as neighbors (38 of them, said an initial *New York Times* report, though that number was later contested) heard her screams. Her attacker fled and then returned to stab and rape her again. Not until he had fled for good did anyone so much as call the police, at 3:50 A.M.

## Bystander Intervention

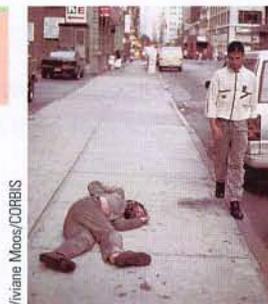
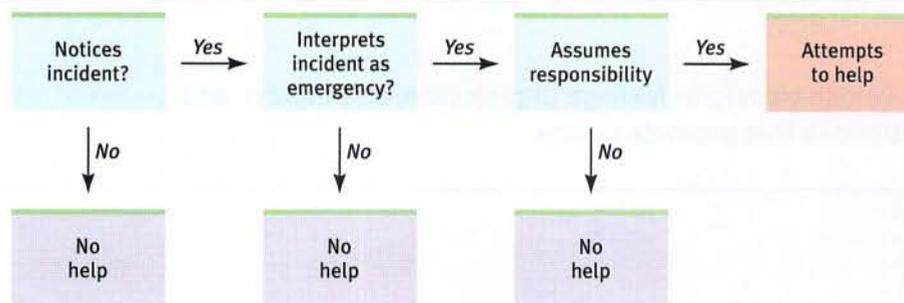
Reflecting on initial reports of the Genovese murder and other such tragedies, most commentators were outraged by the bystanders’ “apathy” and “indifference.” Rather than blaming the onlookers, social psychologists John Darley and Bibb Latané (1968b) attributed their inaction to an important situational factor—the presence of others. Given certain circumstances, they suspected, most of us might behave similarly.

After staging emergencies under various conditions, Darley and Latané assembled their findings into a decision scheme: We will help only if the situation enables us first to *notice* the incident, then to *interpret* it as an emergency, and finally to *assume responsibility* for helping (FIGURE 80.1). At each step, the presence of others can turn us away from the path that leads to helping.

**Figure 80.1**

### The decision-making process for bystander intervention

Before helping, one must first notice an emergency, then correctly interpret it, and then feel responsible. (From Darley & Latané, 1968b.)



Viviane Mosso/CORBIS

Darley and Latané reached their conclusions after interpreting the results of a series of experiments. For example, they simulated a physical emergency in their laboratory as students participated in a discussion over an intercom. Each student was in a separate cubicle, and only the person whose microphone was switched on could be heard. When his turn came, one student (an accomplice of the experimenters) made sounds as though he were having an epileptic seizure, and he called for help (Darley & Latané, 1968a).

How did the other students react? As FIGURE 80.2 shows, those who believed only they could hear the victim—and therefore thought they alone were responsible for helping him—usually went to his aid. Students who thought others also could hear the victim’s cries were more likely to ignore the victim. When more people shared responsibility for helping—when there was a *diffusion of responsibility*—any single listener was less likely to help.

Hundreds of additional experiments have confirmed this **bystander effect**. For example, researchers and their assistants took 1497 elevator rides in three cities and “accidentally” dropped coins or pencils in front of 4813 fellow passengers (Latané & Darley, 1968). When alone with the person in need, 40 percent helped; in the presence of 5 other bystanders, only 20 percent helped.

Observations of behavior in thousands of such situations—relaying an emergency phone call, aiding a stranded motorist, donating blood, picking up dropped books, contributing money, giving time—show that the *best* odds of our helping someone occur when

- the person appears to need and deserve help.
- the person is in some way similar to us.
- the person is a woman.

**bystander effect** the tendency for any given bystander to be less likely to give aid if other bystanders are present.

### AP® Exam Tip

Common sense suggests that you would be more likely to get help if there are more people around, but research on the bystander effect has in fact shown just the opposite is true. This concept often shows up on the AP® exam, so be sure you understand it.

- we have just observed someone else being helpful.
- we are not in a hurry.
- we are in a small town or rural area.
- we are feeling guilty.
- we are focused on others and not preoccupied.
- we are in a good mood.

This last result, that happy people are helpful people, is one of the most consistent findings in all of psychology. As poet Robert Browning (1868) observed, “Oh, make us happy and you make us good!” It doesn’t matter how we are cheered. Whether by being made to feel successful and intelligent, by thinking happy thoughts, by finding money, or even by receiving a posthypnotic suggestion, we become more generous and more eager to help (Carlson et al., 1988). And given a feeling of elevation after witnessing or learning of someone else’s self-giving deed, our helping will become even more pronounced (Schnall et al., 2010).

So happiness breeds helpfulness. But it’s also true that helpfulness breeds happiness. Making charitable donations activates brain areas associated with reward (Harbaugh et al., 2007). That helps explain a curious finding: People who give money away are happier than those who spend it almost entirely on themselves. In one experiment, researchers gave people an envelope with cash and instructions either to spend it on themselves or to spend it on others (Dunn et al., 2008). Which group was happiest at the day’s end? It was, indeed, those assigned to the spend-it-on-others condition.

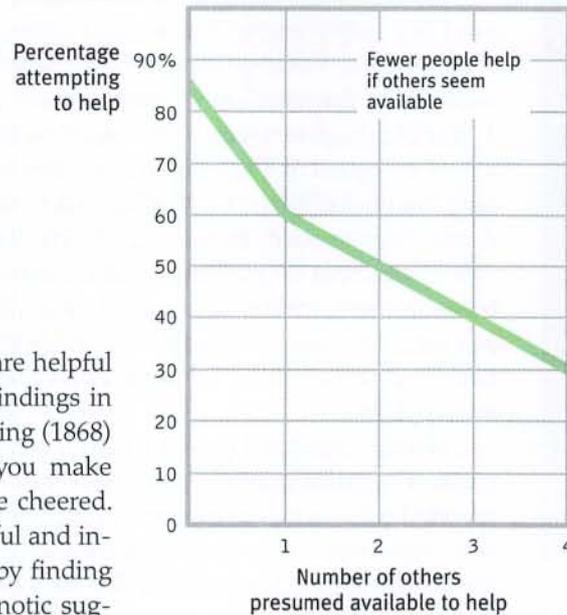
## The Norms for Helping

### 80-2 How do social exchange theory and social norms explain helping behavior?

*Why* do we help? One widely held view is that self-interest underlies all human interactions, that our constant goal is to maximize rewards and minimize costs. Accountants call it *cost-benefit analysis*. Philosophers call it *utilitarianism*. Social psychologists call it **social exchange theory**. If you are pondering whether to donate blood, you may weigh the costs of doing so (time, discomfort, and anxiety) against the benefits (reduced guilt, social approval, and good feelings). If the rewards exceed the costs, you will help.

Others believe that we help because we have been socialized to do so, through norms that prescribe how we *ought* to behave. Through socialization, we learn the **reciprocity norm**, the expectation that we should return help, not harm, to those who have helped us. In our relations with others of similar status, the reciprocity norm compels us to give (in favors, gifts, or social invitations) about as much as we receive.

The reciprocity norm kicked in after Dave Tally, a Tempe, Arizona, homeless man, found \$3300 in a backpack that had been lost by an Arizona State University student headed to buy a used car (Lacey, 2010). Instead of using the cash for much-needed bike repairs, food, and shelter, Tally turned the backpack in to the social service agency where he volunteered. To reciprocate Tally’s help, the student thanked him with a reward. Hearing about Tally’s self-giving deeds, dozens of others also sent him money and job offers.



**Figure 80.2**

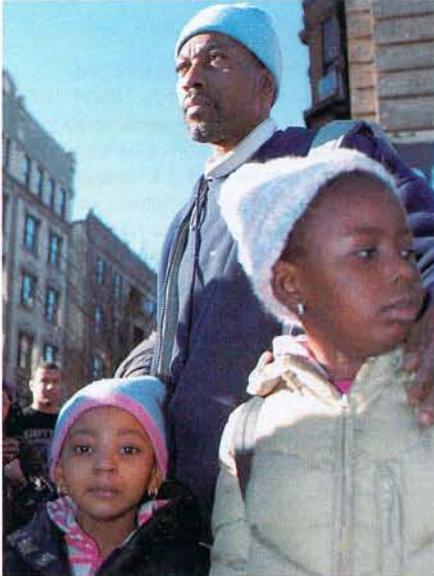
**Responses to a simulated physical emergency** When people thought they alone heard the calls for help from a person they believed to be having an epileptic seizure, they usually helped. But when they thought four others were also hearing the calls, fewer than one-third responded. (From Darley & Latané, 1968a.)

#### social exchange theory

the theory that our social behavior is an exchange process, the aim of which is to maximize benefits and minimize costs.

**reciprocity norm** an expectation that people will help, not hurt, those who have helped them.

AP Photo/Newsday, Nick Brooks



### Subway hero Wesley Autrey

"I don't feel like I did something spectacular; I just saw someone who needed help."

We also learn a **social-responsibility norm**: that we should help those who need our help—young children and others who cannot give as much as they receive—even if the costs outweigh the benefits. Construction worker Wesley Autrey exemplified the social-responsibility norm on January 2, 2007. He and his 6- and 4-year-old daughters were awaiting a New York City subway train when, before them, a man collapsed in a seizure, got up, then stumbled to the platform's edge and fell onto the tracks. With train headlights approaching, "I had to make a split decision," Autrey later recalled (Buckley, 2007). His decision, as his girls looked on in horror, was to leap from the platform, push the man off the tracks and into a foot-deep space between them, and lay atop him. As the train screeched to a halt, five cars traveled just above his head, leaving grease on his knit cap. When Autrey cried out, "I've got two daughters up there. Let them know their father is okay," the onlookers erupted into applause.

People who attend weekly religious services often are admonished to practice the social-responsibility norm, and sometimes they do. In American surveys, they have reported twice as many volunteer hours spent helping the poor and infirm, compared with those who rarely or never attend religious services (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1992; Independent Sector, 2002). Between 2006 and 2008, Gallup polls sampled more than 300,000 people across 140 countries, comparing those "highly religious" (who said religion was important to them and who had attended a religious service in the prior week) with those less religious. The highly religious, despite being poorer, were about 50 percent more likely to report having "donated money to a charity in the last month" and to have volunteered time to an organization (Pelham & Crabtree, 2008). Although positive social norms encourage generosity and enable group living, conflicts often divide us.

## Conflict and Peacemaking

We live in surprising times. With astonishing speed, recent democratic movements swept away totalitarian rule in Eastern European and Arab countries, and hopes for a new world order displaced the Cold War chill. And yet, the twenty-first century began with terrorist acts and war. *Every day*, the world has continued to spend more than \$3 billion for arms and armies—money that could have been used for housing, nutrition, education, and health care. Knowing that wars begin in human minds, psychologists have wondered: What in the human mind causes destructive conflict? How might the perceived threats of social diversity be replaced by a spirit of cooperation?

### Elements of Conflict

80-3

How do social traps and mirror-image perceptions fuel social conflict?

To a social psychologist, a **conflict** is a perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas. The elements of conflict are much the same, whether we are speaking of nations at war, cultural groups feuding within a society, or partners sparring in a relationship. In each situation, people become enmeshed in potentially destructive processes that can produce results no one wants. Among these processes are social traps and distorted perceptions.

### SOCIAL TRAPS

In some situations, we support our collective well-being by pursuing our personal interests. As capitalist Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." In other situations, we harm our collective well-being by pursuing our personal interests. Such situations are **social traps**.

#### social-responsibility norm

an expectation that people will help those needing their help.

**conflict** a perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas.

**social trap** a situation in which the conflicting parties, by each rationally pursuing their self-interest rather than the good of the group, become caught in mutually destructive behavior.

		Person 1	
		Choose A	Choose B
Person 2	Choose A	Optimal outcome +\$5	+\$10
	Choose B	+\$5	-\$5

+\$10	-\$5	Probable outcome 0	0
-------	------	-----------------------	---

**Figure 80.3**

**Social-trap game matrix** By pursuing our self-interest and not trusting others, we can end up losers. To illustrate this, imagine playing the game on the left. The light-orange triangles show the outcomes for Person 1, which depend on the choices made by both players. If you were Person 1, would you choose A or B? (This game is called a *non-zero-sum* game because the outcomes need not add up to zero; both sides can win or both can lose.)

Consider the simple game matrix in **FIGURE 80.3**, which is similar to those used in experiments with countless thousands of people. Both sides can win or both can lose, depending on the players' individual choices. Pretend you are Person 1, and that you and Person 2 will each receive the amount shown after you separately choose either A or B. (You might invite someone to look at the matrix with you and take the role of Person 2.) Which do you choose—A or B?

You and Person 2 are caught in a dilemma. If you both choose A, you both benefit, making \$5 each. Neither of you benefits if you both choose B, for neither of you makes anything. Nevertheless, on any single trial you serve your own interests if you choose B: You can't lose, and you might make \$10. But the same is true for the other person. Hence, the social trap: As long as you both pursue your own immediate best interest and choose B, you will both end up with nothing—the typical result—when you could have made \$5.

Many real-life situations similarly pit our individual interests against our communal well-being. Individual whalers reasoned that the few whales they took would not threaten the species and that if they didn't take them others would anyway. The result: Some species of whales became endangered. Ditto for the buffalo hunters of yesterday and the elephant-tusk poachers of today. Individual car owners and home owners reason, "It would cost me comfort or money to buy a more fuel-efficient car and furnace. Besides, the fossil fuels I burn don't noticeably add to the greenhouse gases." When enough others reason similarly, the collective result threatens disaster—climate change, rising seas, and more extreme weather.

AP Photo/Lisa Poole



**Not in my ocean!** Many people support alternative energy sources, including wind turbines. But proposals to construct wind farms in real-world neighborhoods elicit less support. One such proposal, for locating wind turbines off the coast of Massachusetts' Nantucket Island, produced heated debate over the future benefits of clean energy versus the costs of altering treasured ocean views and, possibly, migratory bird routes.

Social traps challenge us to find ways of reconciling our right to pursue our personal well-being with our responsibility for the well-being of all. Psychologists have therefore explored ways to convince people to cooperate for their mutual betterment—through agreed-upon *regulations*, through better *communication*, and through promoting *awareness* of our responsibilities toward community, nation, and the whole of humanity (Dawes, 1980; Linder, 1982; Sato, 1987). Given effective regulations, communication, and awareness, people more often cooperate, whether it be in playing a laboratory game or the real game of life.

### ENEMY PERCEPTIONS

Psychologists have noted that those in conflict have a curious tendency to form diabolical images of one another. These distorted images are, ironically, so similar that we call them **mirror-image perceptions**: As we see “them”—as untrustworthy, with evil intentions—so “they” see us. Each demonizes the other.

Mirror-image perceptions can often feed a vicious cycle of hostility. If Juan believes Maria is annoyed with him, he may snub her, causing her to act in ways that justify his perception. As with individuals, so with countries. Perceptions can become **self-fulfilling prophecies**. They may confirm themselves by influencing the other country to react in ways that seem to justify them.

Participants tend to see their own actions as responses to provocation, not as the causes of what happens next. Perceiving themselves as returning tit for tat, they often hit back harder, as University College London volunteers did in one experiment (Shergill et al., 2003). Their task: After feeling pressure on their own finger, they were to use a mechanical device to press on another volunteer’s finger. Although told to reciprocate with the same amount of pressure, they typically responded with about 40 percent more force than they had just experienced. Despite seeking only to respond in kind, their touches soon escalated to hard presses, much as when each child after a fight claims that “I just poked him, but he hit me harder.”

Perceived provocations feed similar cycles of hostility on the world stage. In 2001, newly elected U.S. President George W. Bush spoke of Saddam Hussein: “Some of today’s tyrants are gripped by an implacable hatred of the United States of America. They hate our friends, they hate our values, they hate democracy and freedom and individual liberty. Many care little for the lives of their own people.” Hussein reciprocated the perception in 2002. The United States, he said, is “an evil tyrant,” with Satan as its protector. It lusts for oil and aggressively attacks those who “defend what is right.”

The point is not that truth must lie midway between two such views (one may be more accurate). The point is that enemy perceptions often form mirror images. Moreover, as enemies change, so do perceptions. In American minds and media, the “bloodthirsty, cruel, treacherous” Japanese of World War II later became our “intelligent, hardworking, self-disciplined, resourceful allies” (Gallup, 1972).

### Promoting Peace

**80-4** How can we transform feelings of prejudice, aggression, and conflict into attitudes that promote peace?

How can we make peace? Can contact, cooperation, communication, and conciliation transform the antagonisms fed by prejudice and conflicts into attitudes that promote peace? Research indicates that, in some cases, they can.

#### CONTACT

Does it help to put two conflicting parties into close contact? It depends. When contact is noncompetitive and between parties of equal status, such as fellow store clerks, it typically helps. Initially prejudiced co-workers of different races have, in such circumstances, usually

#### mirror-image perceptions

mutual views often held by conflicting people, as when each side sees itself as ethical and peaceful and views the other side as evil and aggressive.

**self-fulfilling prophecy** a belief that leads to its own fulfillment.

come to accept one another. This finding is confirmed by a statistical digest of more than 500 studies of face-to-face contact with outgroups (such as ethnic minorities, the elderly, and those with disabilities). Among the quarter-million people studied across 38 nations, contact has been correlated with, or in experimental studies has led to, more positive attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). Some examples:

- With interracial contact, South African Whites' and Blacks' "attitudes [have moved] into closer alignment" (Dixon et al, 2007; Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2010). In South Africa, as elsewhere, the contact effect is somewhat less for lower-status ethnic groups' views of higher-status groups (Durrheim & Dixon, 2010; Gibson & Claassen, 2010).
- Heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay people are influenced not only by what they know but also by whom they know (Smith et al., 2009). In surveys, the reason people most often give for becoming more supportive of same-sex marriage is "having friends, family or acquaintances who are gay or lesbian" (Pew, 2013).
- Friendly contact, say between Blacks and Whites, improves attitudes not only toward one another, but also toward other outgroups, such as Hispanics (Tausch et al., 2010).
- Even indirect contact with an outgroup member (via story reading or through a friend who has an outgroup friend) has reduced prejudice (Cameron & Rutland, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2007).

However, contact is not always enough. In most desegregated schools, ethnic groups resegregate themselves in the lunchrooms and classrooms, and on the school grounds (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Clack et al., 2005; Schofield, 1986). People in each group often think that they would welcome more contact with the other group, but they assume the other group does not reciprocate the wish (Richeson & Shelton, 2007). "I don't reach out to them, because I don't want to be rebuffed; they don't reach out to me, because they're just not interested." When such mirror-image misperceptions are corrected, friendships may then form and prejudices melt.

## COOPERATION

To see if enemies could overcome their differences, researcher Muzafer Sherif (1966) set a conflict in motion. He separated 22 Oklahoma City boys into two separate camp areas. Then he had the two groups compete for prizes in a series of activities. Before long, each group became intensely proud of itself and hostile to the other group's "sneaky," "smart-alecky stinkers." Food wars broke out. Cabins were ransacked. Fistfights had to be broken up by camp counselors. Brought together, the two groups avoided each other, except to taunt and threaten. Little did they know that within a few days, they would be friends.

Sherif accomplished this by giving them **superordinate goals**—shared goals that could be achieved only through cooperation. When he arranged for the camp water supply to "fail," all 22 boys had to work together to restore water. To rent a movie in those pre-DVD days, they all had to pool their resources. To move a stalled truck, the boys needed to combine their strength, pulling and pushing together. Having used isolation and competition to make strangers into enemies, Sherif used shared predicaments and goals to turn enemies into friends. What reduced conflict was not mere contact, but *cooperative* contact.

A shared predicament likewise had a powerfully unifying effect in the weeks after 9/11. Patriotism soared as Americans felt "we" were under attack. Gallup-surveyed approval of "our President" shot up from 51 percent the week before the attack to a highest-ever 90 percent level 10 days after (Newport, 2002). In chat groups and everyday speech, even the word *we* (relative to *I*) surged in the immediate aftermath (Pennebaker, 2002).

"You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist." -INDIRA GANDHI, 1971

**superordinate goals** shared goals that override differences among people and require their cooperation.

AP/Getty Images



**Striving for peace** The road to reconciliation in the Middle East may be arduous, but as former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted in his Nobel lecture, “Most of us have overlapping identities which unite us with very different groups. We *can* love what we are, without hating what—and who—we are *not*. We can thrive in our own tradition, even as we learn from others” (2001). Pictured here are Palestinian statesman Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and U. S. President Barack Obama.

At such times, cooperation can lead people to define a new, inclusive group that dissolves their former subgroups (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1999). To accomplish this, you might seat members of two groups not on opposite sides, but alternately around a table. Give them a new, shared name. Have them work together. Then watch “us” and “them” become “we.” After 9/11, one 18-year-old New Jersey man described this shift in his own social identity: “I just thought of myself as Black. But now I feel like I’m an American, more than ever” (Sengupta, 2001). In a real experiment, White Americans who read a newspaper article about a terrorist threat against all Americans subsequently expressed reduced prejudice against Black Americans (Dovidio et al., 2004).

If cooperative contact between rival group members encourages positive attitudes, might this principle bring people together in multicultural schools? Could interracial friendships replace competitive classroom situations with cooperative ones? Could cooperative learning maintain or even enhance student achievement? Experiments with adolescents from 11 countries confirm that, in each case, the answer is *Yes* (Roseth et al., 2008). In the classroom as in the sports arena, members of interracial groups who work together on projects typically come to feel friendly toward one another. Knowing this, thousands of teachers have made interracial cooperative learning part of their classroom experience.

The power of cooperative activity to make friends of former enemies has led psychologists to urge increased international exchange and cooperation. As we engage in mutually beneficial trade, as we work to protect our common destiny on this fragile planet, and as we become more aware that our hopes and fears are shared, we can transform misperceptions that feed conflict into feelings of solidarity based on common interests.

## COMMUNICATION

When real-life conflicts become intense, a third-party mediator—a marriage counselor, labor mediator, diplomat, community volunteer—may facilitate much-needed communication (Rubin et al., 1994). Mediators help each party to voice its viewpoint and to understand the other’s needs and goals. If successful, mediators can replace a competitive *win-lose* orientation with a cooperative *win-win* orientation that leads to a mutually beneficial resolution. A classic example: Two friends, after quarreling over an orange, agreed to

**Superordinate goals override differences** Cooperative efforts to achieve shared goals are an effective way to break down social barriers.



AP Photo/Grant Hindstey

split it. One squeezed his half for juice. The other used the peel from her half to flavor a cake. If only the two had understood each other's motives, they could have hit on the win-win solution of one having all the juice, the other all the peel.

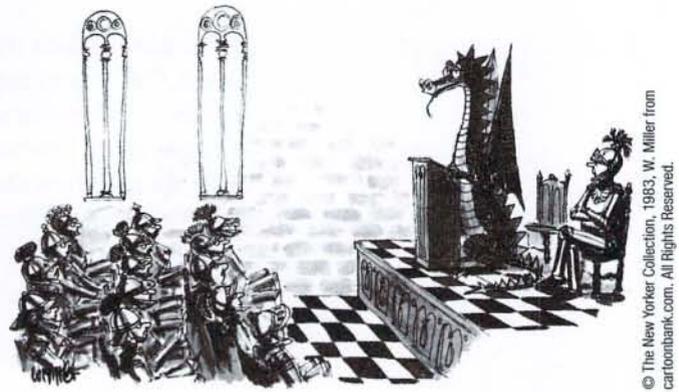
### CONCILIATION

Understanding and cooperative resolution are most needed, yet least likely, in times of anger or crisis (Bodenhausen et al., 1994; Tetlock, 1988). When conflicts intensify, images become more stereotyped, judgments more rigid, and communication more difficult, or even impossible. Each party is likely to threaten, coerce, or retaliate. In the weeks before the Persian Gulf war, the first President George Bush threatened, in the full glare of publicity, to “kick Saddam’s ass.” Saddam Hussein communicated in kind, threatening to make Americans “swim in their own blood.”

Under such conditions, is there an alternative to war or surrender? Social psychologist Charles Osgood (1962, 1980) advocated a strategy of *Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction*, nicknamed **GRIT**. In applying GRIT, one side first announces its recognition of mutual interests and its intent to reduce tensions. It then initiates one or more small, conciliatory acts. Without weakening one’s retaliatory capability, this modest beginning opens the door for reciprocity by the other party. Should the enemy respond with hostility, one reciprocates in kind. But so, too, with any conciliatory response.

In laboratory experiments, small conciliatory gestures—a smile, a touch, a word of apology—have allowed both parties to begin edging down the tension ladder to a safer rung where communication and mutual understanding can begin (Lindsfold et al., 1978, 1988). In a real-world international conflict, U.S. President John F. Kennedy’s gesture of stopping atmospheric nuclear tests began a series of reciprocated conciliatory acts that culminated in the 1963 atmospheric test-ban treaty.

As working toward shared goals reminds us, we are more alike than different. Civilization advances not by conflict and cultural isolation, but by tapping the knowledge, the skills, and the arts that are each culture’s legacy to the whole human race. Thanks to cultural sharing, every modern society is enriched by a cultural mix (Sowell, 1991). We have China to thank for paper and printing and for the magnetic compass that opened the great explorations. We have Egypt to thank for trigonometry. We have the Islamic world and India’s Hindus to thank for our Arabic numerals. While celebrating and claiming these diverse cultural legacies, we can also welcome the enrichment of today’s social diversity. We can view ourselves as instruments in a human orchestra. And we—this book’s worldwide readers—can therefore each affirm our own culture’s heritage while building bridges of communication, understanding, and cooperation across our cultural traditions.



© The New Yorker Collection, 1983, W. Miller from cartoonbank.com. All Rights Reserved.

*“To begin with, I would like to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation for the opportunity to meet with you. While there are still profound differences between us, I think the very fact of my presence here today is a major breakthrough.”*

**GRIT** Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction—a strategy designed to decrease international tensions.

## Before You Move On

### ▶ ASK YOURSELF

Do you regret not getting along with some friend or family member? How might you go about reconciling that relationship?

### ▶ TEST YOURSELF

Why didn’t anybody help Kitty Genovese? What social relations principle did this incident illustrate?

Answers to the Test Yourself questions can be found in Appendix E at the end of the book.

\* \* \*

If you just finished reading this book, your introduction to psychological science is completed. Our tour of psychological science has taught me much—and you, too?—about our moods and memories, about the reach of our unconscious, about how we flourish and struggle, about how we perceive our physical and social worlds, and about how our biology and culture in turn shape us. My hope, as your guide on this tour, is that you have shared some of my fascination, grown in your understanding and compassion, and sharpened your critical thinking. I also hope you enjoyed the ride.

With every good wish in your future endeavors (including the AP® exam!),

David G. Myers

www.davidmyers.org

## Module 80 Review

80-1

When are people most—and least—likely to help?

- *Altruism* is unselfish regard for the well-being of others.
- We are most likely to help when we (a) notice an incident, (b) interpret it as an emergency, and (c) assume responsibility for helping. Other factors, including our mood and our similarity to the victim, also affect our willingness to help.
- We are least likely to help if other bystanders are present (the *bystander effect*).

80-2

How do social exchange theory and social norms explain helping behavior?

- *Social exchange theory* is the view that we help others because it is in our own self-interest; in this view, the goal of social behavior is maximizing personal benefits and minimizing costs.
- Others believe that helping results from socialization, in which we are taught guidelines for expected behaviors in social situations, such as the *reciprocity norm* and the *social-responsibility norm*.

80-3

How do social traps and mirror-image perceptions fuel social conflict?

- A *conflict* is a perceived incompatibility of actions, goals, or ideas.
- *Social traps* are situations in which people in conflict pursue their own individual self-interest, harming the collective well-being.
- Individuals and cultures in conflict also tend to form *mirror-image perceptions* that may become *self-fulfilling prophecies*: Each party views the opponent as untrustworthy and evil-intentioned, and itself as an ethical, peaceful victim.

80-4

How can we transform feelings of prejudice, aggression, and conflict into attitudes that promote peace?

- Peace can result when individuals or groups work together to achieve *superordinate* (shared) goals.
- Research indicates that four processes—contact, cooperation, communication, and conciliation—help promote peace.

## Multiple-Choice Questions

- Which of the following is the best term or phrase for the unselfish concern for the welfare of others?
  - Assuming responsibility
  - Bystander intervention
  - Altruism
  - Bystander effect
  - Diffusion of responsibility
- Which of the following maintains that our social behavior is an exchange process that minimizes costs?
  - Social-responsibility norm
  - Bystander apathy
  - Reciprocity norm
  - Social exchange theory
  - Biopsychosocial hypothesis

3. What do we call a situation in which the conflicting parties, by rationally pursuing their self-interest, become caught in mutually destructive behavior?
  - a. Social trap
  - b. Conflict
  - c. Bystander intervention
  - d. Diffusion of responsibility
  - e. Social-responsibility norm
4. What do we call a belief that leads to its own fulfillment?
  - a. Superordinate goal
  - b. Mirror-image perception
  - c. Enemy perception
  - d. Social trap
  - e. Self-fulfilling prophecy

## Practice FRQs

1. According to Darley and Latané, what three things must happen for a bystander to intervene?
2. The author identifies two “enemy perceptions.” Name and describe both.

(4 points)

### Answer

**1 point:** The bystander must notice the event.

**1 point:** The bystander must interpret the incident as an emergency.

**1 point:** The bystander must assume responsibility.

# Unit XIV Review

## Key Terms and Concepts to Remember

- |                                        |                                          |                                    |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| social psychology, p. 754              | groupthink, p. 775                       | passionate love, p. 803            |
| attribution theory, p. 754             | culture, p. 776                          | companionate love, p. 803          |
| fundamental attribution error, p. 754  | norm, p. 777                             | equity, p. 804                     |
| attitude, p. 756                       | prejudice, p. 780                        | self-disclosure, p. 804            |
| peripheral route persuasion, p. 756    | stereotype, p. 780                       | altruism, p. 807                   |
| central route persuasion, p. 756       | discrimination, p. 780                   | bystander effect, p. 808           |
| foot-in-the-door phenomenon, p. 757    | just-world phenomenon, p. 784            | social exchange theory, p. 809     |
| role, p. 758                           | ingroup, p. 784                          | reciprocity norm, p. 809           |
| cognitive dissonance theory, p. 759    | outgroup, p. 784                         | social-responsibility norm, p. 810 |
| conformity, p. 763                     | ingroup bias, p. 784                     | conflict, p. 810                   |
| normative social influence, p. 764     | scapegoat theory, p. 785                 | social trap, p. 810                |
| informational social influence, p. 764 | other-race effect, p. 786                | mirror-image perceptions, p. 812   |
| social facilitation, p. 771            | aggression, p. 789                       | self-fulfilling prophecy, p. 812   |
| social loafing, p. 773                 | frustration-aggression principle, p. 791 | superordinate goals, p. 813        |
| deindividuation, p. 773                | social script, p. 792                    | GRIT, p. 815                       |
| group polarization, p. 774             | mere exposure effect, p. 798             |                                    |

## Key Contributors to Remember

Philip Zimbardo, p. 758

Solomon Asch, p. 763

Leon Festinger, p. 759

Stanley Milgram, p. 765

## AP<sup>®</sup> Exam Practice Questions

### Multiple-Choice Questions

- The enhancement of a group's prevailing tendencies occurs when people within a group discuss an idea that most of them either favor or oppose. What is this tendency called?
  - Group polarization
  - Deindividuation
  - The just-world phenomenon
  - Discrimination
  - Categorization
- Which of the following statements about the foot-in-the-door phenomenon is *false*?
  - People who agree to a small action are less likely to agree to a larger one later.
  - The Chinese army took advantage of this phenomenon in the thought control program they used on prisoners during the Korean War.
  - To get people to agree to something big, start small and build.
  - Succumb to a temptation and you will find the next temptation harder to resist.
  - This phenomenon has been used to boost charitable contributions, blood donations, and product sales.
- According to research on the bystander effect, which of the following people is most likely to stop and help a stranger?
  - Jacob is on his way to a doctor's appointment with his young son.
  - Xavier lives in a crowded city.
  - Malika is in a terrible mood, having just learned that she failed her midterm exam.
  - Ciera just saw a young girl offering her arm to help an older woman cross the street.
  - Mahmood is lost in thought as he walks to work, thinking about his upcoming presentation.
- Believing that your school is better than all the other schools in town is an example of what psychological concept?
  - Ingroup bias
  - Conformity
  - Scapegoat theory
  - Discrimination
  - Groupthink
- People frequently credit or blame either internal dispositions or external situations for others' behavior. What is this tendency called?
  - The foot-in-the-door phenomenon
  - The fundamental attribution error
  - Attribution
  - Social psychology
  - Social thinking
- Researchers have found that people tend to become more hostile in situations when they are exposed to aversive stimuli, such as heat or personal insults. What is the term for this tendency?
  - The proximity effect
  - GRIT
  - The frustration-aggression principle
  - Social scripting
  - Deindividuation
- Galileo's notion that the earth revolved around the sun was in opposition to the widespread beliefs of his day. What social psychological principle is this an example of?
  - Social thinking
  - Group polarization
  - Conformity
  - A stereotype
  - Minority influence
- Physical or verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy is called
  - the mere exposure effect.
  - hindsight bias.
  - aggression.
  - the just-world phenomenon.
  - the other-race effect.
- What tension occurs when we become aware that our attitudes and actions don't coincide?
  - Role playing
  - The fundamental attribution error
  - Social pressure
  - Social influence
  - Cognitive dissonance

- 10.** Which of the following *least* describes prejudice?
- An unjustifiable attitude toward a group
  - Schemas that influence how we notice and interpret events
  - Preconceived ideas that bias our impressions of others' behavior
  - A physical behavior intended to hurt or destroy
  - Automatic and unconscious thoughts and behaviors
- 11.** Which social psychology principle influences people to perform a task better in the presence of others?
- Compliance
  - Group polarization
  - Social facilitation
  - Conformity
  - Social loafing
- 12.** Becoming less self-conscious and less restrained when in a group situation is referred to as
- social loafing.
  - deindividuation.
  - social facilitation.
  - obedience.
  - cognitive dissonance.
- 13.** If Juan believes Ngoc is annoyed with him, he may snub her, causing her to act in ways that justify his perception. What concept is this an example of?
- Superordinate goals
  - Tension-reduction
  - A social trap
  - A mirror-image perception
  - Self-fulfilling prophecy
- 14.** Which of the following is the most complete definition of conformity?
- Sharing a mood with others
  - Unconsciously mimicking the behaviors and reactions of others
  - Changing thoughts about a situation in order to please an authority figure
  - Adjusting our behavior or thinking toward some group standard
  - Bringing our attitudes in line with our actions
- 15.** Sophia was not sure she would like the new driver of her school bus, but during the year she realized she was looking forward to greeting him in the morning and hearing one of his corny jokes. Which concept best explains her change in perception?
- Similarity
  - Ingroup bias
  - Companionate attraction
  - Social trap
  - Mere exposure effect

## Free-Response Questions

1. Abi moved from her small rural hometown to a large city to pursue her singing career. She was hired for an important and popular choral performance. She is nervous but excited about this new opportunity. Explain how the following social psychology factors might affect her experiences in the “big city.”
  - Self-fulfilling prophecy
  - Frustration-aggression model
  - Social facilitation
  - Reciprocity norm

### Rubric for Free Response Question 1

**1 point:** Self-fulfilling prophecy: Abi may think that she is not talented enough to compete with all of the other singers in the performance. Because of her low expectations of herself, she may not perform to the best of her ability. 🔄 Page 812

**1 point:** Frustration-aggression model: If Abi does not progress to her satisfaction, and experiences frustration as her career stagnates, she may lash out at her colleagues either physically or verbally or even try to railroad others’ careers to further her own. 🔄 Page 791

**1 point:** Social facilitation: Abi has been singing for a number of years. Because this is a well-practiced activity, Abi’s performance should be enhanced by the presence of others. Because she will have larger crowds in the “big city,” Abi’s performance should improve in front of larger crowds. 🔄 Page 771

**1 point:** Reciprocity norm: If Abi receives gifts (such as flowers) from the audience, she may be motivated to give an extra effort in her performances. If the audience perceives that Abi is throwing herself completely into her performance and exhausting herself trying to entertain them, they each will be more likely to applaud and cheer because the reciprocity norm indicates we will often return the efforts or feelings of others. 🔄 Page 809

2. Peter and Manuela met in their high school senior year psychology class. They sat near each other and were often partnered during class discussions and group work. They were both on the swim team and often volunteered at the same homelessness prevention shelter. By the end of the year, they became good friends. Later, Manuela and Peter attended the same college, and after graduation they became engaged. When they attended their five-year high school reunion it was obvious to their friends from high school that they were a very happy couple.

Explain the *reward theory of attraction* and give an example to show how each of the following factors may have influenced Manuela and Peter’s developing relationship from high school through college.

- Proximity
- Equity
- Self-disclosure
- Companionate love

**(5 points)**

3. Dutch is in his first year as a student at a large university. At the urging of some friends, he attended a “pep rally” on the night prior to the football game. At the rally, the marching band played the university’s fight song and Dutch began singing along as they did. The head football coach then gave a rousing speech and Dutch joined with the hundreds of other students to cheer him. Although Dutch had not paid attention to the football team prior to the rally, he enthusiastically participated in the rally, even going so far as to have an image of the team’s mascot painted on his face. The following day, he attended the game and since has become an avid fan of the football team.

Analyze Dutch’s behavior at the rally and afterwards, using each of the following principles of social psychology:

- Peripheral route persuasion
- Central route persuasion
- Automatic mimicry
- Social facilitation
- Deindividuation

**(5 points)**