

Social Psychology: Cognition

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- how self-perception forms
- how attitudes and prejudices form
- how interpersonal attraction develops

“What a good girl!” “Big boys don’t cry!” “Spend more time on your math and science.” “You’ll never be any good at art.” We are the targets of comments about who and what we are or aren’t—who and what we should or shouldn’t be—from the time we first comprehend language. How important are these comments to the development of our idea of self? In what ways do they influence our sense of future possibilities or our belief in our limitations? This chapter will explore the importance of other people to the development of our self-perception.

The important people in our lives—our reference group—also help to shape our attitudes and beliefs. Through our natural cognitive process of categorizing the world, we develop stereotypes, and sometimes prejudices. Where do these come from?

Are there universal standards for what makes a person attractive? Why do people develop an attraction for one another? And what’s love got to do with it?

What Is Social Psychology?

Social psychology is the study of how people influence and are influenced by others. Unlike sociology, which emphasizes group processes, social psychology emphasizes the individual. In this chapter, we'll examine how social situations and interactions with others affect our thinking. In the next chapter, we'll look at how those same factors affect behavior.

The Self

The *self* is what we perceive ourselves to be—an insider's view of our personality. The development of our concept of self depends heavily on our relations with others. Many of the concepts that we develop, such as generosity, kindness, or love, come from our experiences with the behaviors of others.

Social Interaction and the Role of Others in Self-Concept

Theories about the importance of social interaction to the development of the concept of self are numerous. Here are a few of the ideas proposed:

- * We are born (preadapted) expecting another being (generally our mothers) to be tuned to our needs.
- * Establishing relationships is a need second only to seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.
- * Establishing relationships is the primary motivation in our lives.

Several theorists go so far as to claim that we are aware of ourselves only because others are, or have been, aware of us. In other words, there is no self without others!

Social psychology is a fairly new approach to understanding the individual. For that reason, it is not surprising that theories about how others influence individual development vary widely. Here are just **three** of the theories about the role of others:

1. We make the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of certain others a part of ourselves and claim them as our own. Children, for instance, often assume the preferences, values, and beliefs of their families and cultures.
2. We use the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others as a way to manage our own motivations, control, self-evaluation, and self-defense. For these purposes, we carry representations of others in ourselves. Depending on the situation, we may remember a parent's admonition to "be careful"; recall that someone else did a task better; emulate a mentor's actions; or think about how we are viewed by our peers.
3. We view representations of others as parts of ourselves. To the extent that maintaining a relationship with a parent, loved one, employer, or coworker is part of how we define ourselves, representations of those people will remain as working parts of ourselves. This differs from the second theory because it focuses on the "whole other" rather than on just the characteristics, beliefs, or actions of others.

Developing Self-Concept

A child's view of his or her competencies combines some parents' views, teachers' views, views of peers, and his or her own direct observation. A person's self-concept may also include images or fantasies of other people. As the child matures, the views of others play different roles in the initiation, maintenance, and evaluation of his or her actions. You may find it interesting to think about how you have internalized the ideas of others in developing your sense of self.

Who Am I?

Researchers are only now exploring the exact mechanisms by which the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of others influence self-concept. R. A. Shweder suggests that our culture provides answers to a number of core self-knowledge questions, including:

- * What is me, and what is not me?
- * What is male, and what is female?
- * What is grownup, and what is childlike?
- * Who is "of my kind," and who is not?
- * What is "our way," and what is not?
- * What determines the hierarchy in acquiring benefits or bearing burdens?
- * Am I independent, dependent, or interdependent?
- * What do I want, and what does the group want?
- * How can I avoid the violence of person vs. person?

How are such questions answered and how do they become part of a person's sense of self? Certain studies show that some of the answers are transmitted through day-to-day conversations with children. For example, children regularly hear statements such as "Boys don't cry," "That's not fair" "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or "Good little girls don't do that." Because children are searching for the answer to what it means to be a person, they absorb these adult—and sometimes peer—values, making them part of their "selves."

Other researchers argue that imitating the actions and values of significant others is merely part of a larger process. They say that an individual absorbs what others have to offer and, with effort, shapes it into forms consistent with his or her own personality and valuable to his or her own purposes.

Self-Schemas

As a child develops language, he or she labels various experiences and makes them more concrete. Words such as *good*, *funny*, or *creative* describe only a small part of a child's internal experience. As children recognize that their perceptions of themselves are, in some ways, different from others' perceptions, or that *good* may be different for various people within their world, they begin to generate schemas that integrate their experiences with the views of others.

As you've seen, *schemas* are the large views we hold about objects, actions, events, and relationships that all pertain to a particular content. **Self-schemas** are cognitive structures that allow people to differentiate themselves from others. Schemas become more detailed as people advance in age and experience, as follows:

- * Young children's self-descriptions generally contain family members or playmates.
- * Adolescents' descriptions of self remain interpersonal as they describe themselves as "friendly," "easy to talk to," or "loyal."
- * As self-schemas become more enriched, an adult develops an "expected" self, perceiving how he or she would behave in various circumstances.
- * Self-schemas can also include "possible" selves that may be either desired or ideal images of self, or feared and unpredictable ones.

Reference Groups

Children are aware that others may have a different opinion of them than they have of themselves. The appraisal of others plays an important role in a person's self-perception in situations without objective feedback, such as grades, athletic ability, or peer appraisal. Unfortunately, children are not very accurate in their perception of what others think of them.

Those people or groups of people whose opinions we care about are called **reference groups**. One theorist says that we see ourselves in terms of "generalized others." We think about "What do *people* think of me?" rather than "What does *my teacher* think of me?"

Social Comparisons

We not only come to see ourselves as others see us, but we come to see ourselves differently depending on the "others" who are around at a given time. Comparing self to others is called **social comparison**, and it has two functions: *normative* and *comparative*. In normative comparison, an individual learns the typical values and behaviors of the group. The comparative function allows an individual to see how he or she differs from the group. There are three different purposes of comparison.

Why Compare?
Self-Evaluation
Diagnosing information about one's abilities.
Self-Improvement
Determining what, if any, of one's characteristics need work.
Self-Enhancement
Enhancing self-esteem by recognizing ways in which one is unique or different.

The Social Identity

Personal identity is composed of an individual's thoughts and emotions, particularly self-knowledge and evaluation. **Social identity** is based on the impressions someone makes, what others think of that person, and his or her attractiveness or popularity within a group. Several theorists maintain that someone

with high social identity and low personal identity will try to get along with others. Those with high personal identity will work for personal achievement.

It would appear that a balance between the two would hold the greatest promise of success in both personal and interpersonal situations.

Sidebar



Protecting the Positive Self

It is important to psychological good health to keep a positive view of oneself. We do this through a process called *reality negotiation*. We think of behaviors as being “good” or “bad” compared to our perception of our ideal self—I do “good” things and I don’t do “bad” things. When we perform a behavior that we perceive as “bad,” we have mechanisms to protect our positive sense of self.

Here are **four** of these mechanisms:

1. Decreasing our connection to the behavior

EXAMPLES: “I didn’t do it,” “I only did it once,” “I didn’t mean to do it.”

2. Decreasing our responsibility

EXAMPLES: “Yes, but . . .,” “Everybody’s doing it,” “It was too

hard. Nobody could have done it right.” Another way to decrease responsibility is blaming it on someone or something else. This argument is presented in court cases when lawyers suggest that upbringing or other circumstances should be held accountable for the accused’s behavior.

3. Self-handicapping

EXAMPLES: “I wasn’t feeling well at the time,” “I was upset (or angry or not myself).” The handicap is responsible for the behavior—not the person.

4. Reducing the “badness” of the behavior

EXAMPLES: “It’s not as bad as it looks,” “It was just a small piece of pie,” or the Robin Hood defense—“I did it for a good cause”—or blaming it on the victim—“he just got what he deserved.”

How Others Perceive Us

The way we perceive one another grows with our experiences of others. Each perception, in turn, affects our expectations and perceptions of the next person we interact with. Our own schemas are partly responsible for the ways we perceive other people. If our schemas about social interactions are based on many positive social experiences, they include the assumption that the next interaction with a person will be positive. On the other hand, negative schemas will cause us to predict negative interactions.

Positive schemas result in our responding to positive or pleasant cues when we meet another person. People with negative schemas will interpret exactly the same cues—the same facial expressions—in an entirely different, and negative, way.

The Function of Schemas

We use schemas to structure our perception of events, make predictions about the future, and decide on goals and plans. Schemas are modified as new experiences provide new or different information about the world. However, schemas that could be too easily changed wouldn't be of much value in bringing stability to our world. We become efficient at fitting people into our schemas as we mature.

First Impressions

The first impression is one tool we use to place people in our schemas. This helps to explain why first impressions are so important and why their effects are so long-lasting.

Even people who believe themselves to be nonjudgmental are affected by the way they first perceive another individual. Numerous studies demonstrate that physical attractiveness plays a large part in the impression we form of a person. When applying for a job, you are encouraged to wear your best clothes and be well groomed because, like it or not, employers will often base their impressions on an applicant's looks. Because people tend to believe that their first impressions of others are correct, other qualifications you demonstrate later may take on less importance to the employer.

It has been estimated that it takes about four minutes for the average person to size up another individual—to decide if that first impression is positive or negative. Some of the factors that people use in that decision are:

- * Cleanliness.
- * Eye contact.
- * Voice quality.
- * Facial expression.
- * Color of the skin.
- * Gender.
- * Age.
- * Personal space.
- * What you say and how you say it.

People judge your intelligence from what you say and how you say it. Depending on the impression you want to make, using or avoiding slang or making jokes can attach you to a peer group or alienate you from a potential employer.

The Effects of First Impressions

If, in a first encounter, someone spends the entire time telling you how important he or she is and generally suggests that you're lucky to become acquainted, how eager will you be to spend more time with that person?

If, on the other hand, a person smiles, asks you about your own interests, and is friendly and warm, you'll probably be more open to a possible friendship. That first impression affects your behavior in regard to that person.

Because first impressions tend to be lasting additions to an individual's schema, they are difficult to overcome. People must generally work much harder to "prove themselves" if the first impression they produced in others was negative.

Self-fulfilling Prophecies

If you're being interviewed for a job and the employer's body language, facial expression, and questions suggest that he or she isn't particularly impressed with you, what would your reaction be? Keep in mind that as a person is forming a first impression of you, you are also forming one. We tend to react positively to smiling, friendly people and negatively to cold or unfriendly people. If the employer acts negatively because of a poor first impression, you are more than likely to confirm that impression in your response to his or her negative behavior. This is called a **self-fulfilling prophecy**. The employer is getting the expected behavior from you, but largely because he or she expected it!

Attribution Theory

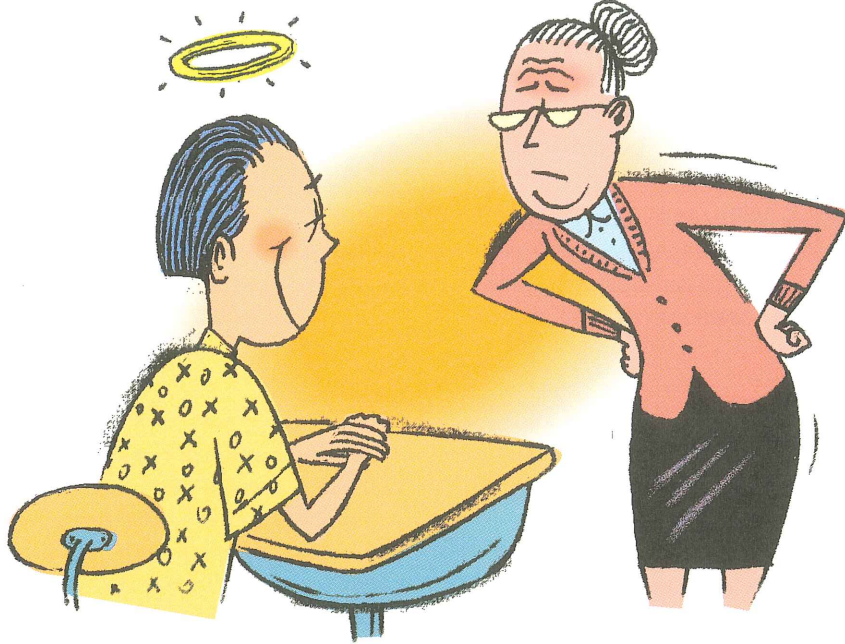
A teacher you really like yells at you for something that normally receives little or no reaction. What reason would you give for this behavior? What if a teacher you didn't like berated you?

Attribution theory suggests that people tend to explain the behavior of others in terms either of the person's personality traits or of external factors such as the situation. If you attributed the first teacher's behavior to a bad mood or irritation at something else, those are external factors. If you said that the second teacher acted out of meanness, you're attributing the behavior to a personality trait.

You yell at your best friend. Why? Research shows that we more often attribute negative behaviors in others to personality traits, while in ourselves, we see the cause as external.

The adaptive character of such behavior can be seen in this example. If you get a poor grade on a test, are you more likely to say that it was because you're not smart enough or because you hadn't studied enough, didn't feel well, or that the material hadn't been explained clearly enough in class? Attributing the cause to such external factors helps you to protect your positive self.

You don't have the same responsibility for the self-image of others that you have for your own, so you are not as prone to look to external factors for causes of their behavior.



How We Make Attributions

The attributions that we make to the behaviors of others and to ourselves depend on:

- * What we already know, believe, or have experienced with regard to the person or situation.
- * The behavior itself.
- * The consequences of our attribution.

Your previous experience with one teacher was positive and with another was negative. You're more likely to attribute the behavior to external events for the "positive" teacher and personality traits for the "negative" teacher. The consequences of the attribution would have simply confirmed your impression of the teacher. When attributing a cause to your own behavior, you tend to attribute "good" behavior to internal personality traits and "bad" behavior to the situation or external influences, thereby maintaining a positive self-concept.

Other Factors in Attribution

Harold Kelley devised a model of attribution based on several possible dimensions of a behavior that can range from high to low.

Let's say that it is the first day of class and a student stumbles walking through the door to the classroom. We don't see any reason for the stumble, but a number of other people also stumble as they enter the room. The behavior can be viewed in several different ways:

- * **Consensus.** If a person behaves in the same manner as many other people in the same circumstances, we are more likely to say that it is the external situation, rather than some personal trait, that causes the behavior. This is called *consensus*.

CRITICAL THINKING



Do We Know Why We Do Things?

According to attribution theory, humans strive to explain behavior—both their own and that of others. As you’ve seen, we often fall victim to various biases in attributing causes to our own behaviors. Can we know the true causes of our behaviors? What do you think?

THE ISSUES

We assume that we have a good reason for almost everything we do. Even a simple act, such as making a choice from a restaurant menu, can be explained in terms of likes and dislikes, the mood we’re in, what we’ve eaten in the past few days, how hungry we are, or the cost of the meal. Sometimes, the reason we give is some combination of those factors. If asked, we can usually generate a set of reasons that appears logical and reasonable.

Michael Gazzaniga and others involved in split-brain research have suggested that schemas or “modules” outside of our conscious awareness actually generate many of our behaviors. Often, we are totally unaware of the reasons for those behaviors. Gazzaniga argues that, when asked, our conscious mind—the “interpreter”—looks at the behavior and generates reasons based on our self-perception and the “rules” of social behavior. If such reasons make sense to others and ourselves, we are satisfied.

Can we know the true causes of our behaviors?

THE PROCESS

- 1 Restate the issues.** In your own words, state the nature of the issue.
- 2 Provide evidence.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *for* people knowing the true causes of their behaviors.
- 3 Give opposing arguments.** From your own experience and from the information above, list the evidence *against* people knowing the true causes of their behaviors.
- 4 Look for more information.** What else would you like to know before you decide? Make a list of your questions. On the Internet, in the psychology section of the library, or in the index of psychology books,

research *hemisphericity*, *Gazzaniga*, *right and left brain modules*, and the *interpreter*.

- 5 Evaluate the information.** Make a chart with two columns:

Knowing the Causes of Behavior	
For	Against

Record the arguments in each column and rank each column of arguments in importance from 1 to 5, with 1 as the most important.

- 6 Draw conclusions.** Write one paragraph supporting your answer to the question “Can we know the true causes of our behavior?” Be sure to state reasons, not just opinions.

- * **Consistency.** If that same student stumbles through the door on other occasions, this is called *consistency*—repetitions of the same behavior in the same situation. While you may begin to attribute the behavior to clumsiness, you may still give the benefit of the doubt if you don't see the person stumbling anywhere else.
- * **Distinctiveness.** If the same student stumbles or bumps into people around the school, this is called *distinctiveness*. You're now likely to attribute the behavior to the trait of clumsiness.

Attribution Bias

How might your inference differ if a Democrat criticizes a Republican or if a Democrat praises a Republican? Depending on whether you're a member of the National Rifle Association or someone who despises guns, you attribute school violence to "bad kids" or to guns. Conservatives might blame poverty on lack of motivation of the poor and unemployed, while liberals might attribute it to external circumstances. Employers might attribute poor production to lazy workers, and workers, to poor working conditions. The complex causes of behaviors are often ignored in favor of the following types of attribution bias:

- * **Fundamental attribution error** is the tendency to underestimate external reasons and overestimate personality traits as causes of people's behavior.

- * **Actor-observer bias** is the tendency to attribute the behavior of others to internal or personality factors and our own behavior to external factors.
- * **Self-serving bias** is the tendency to attribute your own positive behaviors to internal causes and negative behaviors to external causes.
- * **Gender bias** is the tendency to attribute positive behaviors in men to internal traits and in women to external causes.

It is interesting that, in some studies, women exhibit gender bias more than men do. When asked to review a book, women tend to give more positive reviews to a book by John Jones than to the same book by Joan Jones. People tend to attribute the success of a woman's book to external factors rather than to intelligence or talent, as they would for a book by a male author.

Attitudes

A belief is something that we assume to be true. Beliefs are often both unconscious and unexamined—that is, we are unaware that some things we think or say are not proven facts. They are something we have come to accept as true without much thought or consideration of evidence.

Attitudes are beliefs and feelings about people, objects, or events that cause us to behave in certain ways. Attitudes are often stated as propositions or statements of fact that are unquestioned—"That's how those people are," "Don't bother trying that. It never works," "Everyone is out to get me," "Capital punishment is wrong."

Often, people aren't aware of their attitudes or of how those attitudes developed. But the attitudes themselves determine what we perceive in our surroundings, how we act toward others, and what we expect to happen as a result of our behavior.

How Attitudes Change

Whenever an inconsistency occurs between an attitude and a behavior, we feel uncomfortable and are motivated to change either the attitude or the behavior. This is called

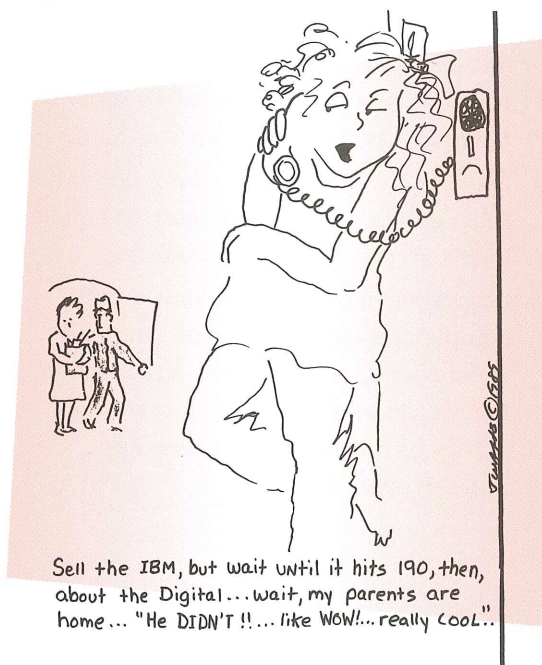
cognitive dissonance. Let's say that you believe what you've heard and read about the risks of smoking. You even tell a friend that smoking is unhealthy, yet you continue to smoke. This produces a level of discomfort that can be reduced either by not smoking or by mentally reducing the risks and trying to persuade yourself that it can't happen to you. The more addicted you are to the behavior, the more likely you are to change the attitude rather than the behavior.

How Attitudes Develop	
Conditioning	When a child says or does something that agrees with what a parent or other adult believes, the child is positively reinforced through praise, a smile, or a nod. Behaviors such as sharing, studying hard, or helping others, when reinforced, develop into attitudes about those behaviors.
Observational Learning	We learn and develop attitudes by watching others. If you see a classmate who is popular and attractive, or popular and engaged in sports, you may develop an attitude that one must be attractive or athletic to be popular.
Cognitive Evaluation	Some attitudes develop as a result of evaluating information and deciding what to believe—cognitive evaluation. This might be the case when you decide that exercise is good for your health or that smoking isn't. When someone's behavior doesn't fit your expectations, you may use cognitive evaluation to change your attitude about and your expectations of the person.
Cognitive Anchors	Some of the earliest attitudes that you form act as fundamental and lasting beliefs around which you shape your world. These cognitive anchors not only shape your perception and interpretation of the world, but also may prevent you from accepting other attitudes that form later in life.



Using Social Schemas to Develop Attitudes

Our social schemas include the ideas we have formed about various groups. When you meet a new person, you automatically process and absorb that person, into existing schemas. You then use the schemas to make predictions about the person. Notice that this involves nothing of the actual characteristics or personality of the individual being assessed. Those tend to be ignored or overlooked.



For many adults the word *teenager* brings certain social schemas to mind. If a person's experience with teenagers is limited to representations in the media, the schemas may include a chatty, silly girl or a silent, brooding boy.

Do all the teenage girls and boys you know fit into these schemas? It is likely that they don't.

Stereotypes

In social psychology, a **stereotype** is a set of distorted, generalized beliefs about a group of people. This generalization comes through in statements such as "Girls are gossips" or "Boys are unfeeling." In analyzing absolute statements like these, it becomes clear that they are false.

Individuals use stereotypes because:

- * They are an efficient, although largely incorrect, way to organize information about other people.
- * Individuals assume that people who are not like themselves are somehow alike.
- * Traits seen in some members of a group are assumed to exist in all members of the group.

Effects of Stereotypes

Stereotyping assigns people to social schemas based on such factors as physical characteristics, age, gender, socioeconomic group, dress, or ethnicity. Rather than being perceived as an individual, a person is seen as a caricature—an exaggerated version of the supposed characteristics of the “group.” Many stereotypes tend to focus on negative characteristics of a group, although some positive stereotypes, such as that attractive people make better leaders, also exist.

It takes a lot of evidence for people to redefine the stereotypes they’ve developed. Even when you get to know someone from another group as an individual—as a person who does not exhibit stereotypical characteristics—you may consider this person the exception rather than admit that your stereotype may be incorrect. Contrary information tends to be assimilated into the stereotype rather than used to change the stereotype.

Stereotypes unfairly limit the potential of members of certain groups. Even a positive stereotype may put an unfair burden on group members. Many “honors” students are familiar with this problem.

Prejudice and Discrimination

Prejudice, from the word *prejudge*, is an unfounded and generally negative attitude toward a group of people. It involves prejudging an individual based on the stereotypical characteristic of his or her group. Prejudice is a mixture of stereotypical beliefs, negative emotions, and schemas

that predispose individuals to act. Some people might believe that politicians are corrupt, and they might feel disgust for politicians’ behavior. As a result, these people don’t go to the polls because “All politicians are crooks, so why bother.”

Consider these **five** causes of prejudice:

- 1. Categorization.** Being able to quickly identify members of one’s own social group can be interpreted as an adaptive behavior. As we’ve seen in earlier chapters, categorization is one of the primary tools of thinking.
- 2. Exaggeration of Differences.** We tend to prefer those who are similar to ourselves in age, socioeconomic level, and attitudes—our “in-group.” We assume that members of “out-groups” are more different than they really are.
- 3. Justifying Economic or Role Status.** The traits that we assign to various groups are used to justify their status or the roles they play in society. If one family is less economically successful than another, someone might justify the difference by assuming they must not work as hard.
- 4. Observational Learning.** Along with attitudes and beliefs, children learn to imitate their parents’ biases and prejudices.
- 5. Scapegoating.** When problems are too complex for an easy solution, we tend to find someone to blame—a scapegoat. Having an easy though unjust solution allows us to feel less threatened and more in control.

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of individuals because they are members of a particular group. People are predisposed to discriminate because of prejudice. Classic cases involve separate schooling for blacks and whites; better education for boys than girls in some cultures; the right to vote afforded to males and not females in the early history of the United States; refusing to employ a person who is overweight or disabled; and firing people because they've reached a certain age.

Cases of discrimination often create self-fulfilling prophecies. If people are discriminated against because they are disabled,

for example, they may have a greater chance of being unemployed, thus reinforcing the stereotype that the disabled don't really want to work. In addition, victims of discrimination tend to have lower self-esteem. This results in lower expectations that, in turn, reduce their opportunities for success.

Overcoming Prejudice

Prejudice is difficult to overcome, but not impossible. Increasing contact among groups, speaking out against prejudice, and making a conscious effort to seek out nonstereotypical qualities within another group can help to reduce prejudice.



Unconscious Prejudice

Researchers at the University of Washington and Yale University have developed a test to measure the unconscious levels of race and age prejudice, gender stereotyping, and self-esteem. The Implicit Association Test (IAT) revealed that 90 to 95 percent of people demonstrate associations that indicate implicit or unconscious prejudices.

In a computer version of one part of the test, people are shown faces that they must quickly identify as young or old. They are then shown words, such as *pleasure*, *evil*, *peace*, and *friend*, and are asked to press keys

to indicate whether each word is good or bad. Finally, faces and words are shown randomly and the terms "young or good" and "old or bad" are the choices. Then the terms are reversed—"young or bad" and "old or good." Making this choice takes much longer! Nearly 80 percent of people show a strong preference for young over old.

The researchers believe that unconscious prejudice may occur despite people's wishes and regardless of the culture in which they live. They hope that awareness of these roots of prejudice may help people overcome these apparently biological tendencies.

Interpersonal Attraction

Attraction, like prejudice, is an attitude. Just as there is a biological tendency to classify self and others, there is a biological necessity to be drawn toward friendship or love of others.

Factors in the formation of friendships or groups include:

- * **Similarity.** People are drawn to those with similar physical or cultural features and commonality of belief or attitude.
- * **Proximity.** People who live or work closely together tend to interact more frequently and share common issues.
- * **Reciprocity.** People tend to enjoy the mutual exchange of feelings or attitudes. Studies show that we are more comfortable with people who appear to like us.

In general, common interests and attitudes lead us to find others attractive.

Physical Attractiveness

People from various cultures find different physical traits attractive. However, there does seem to be some universal appeal in large eyes, high cheekbones, and narrow jaws. No such universal standard of body type exists. Some cultures value a full-bodied look in women as indicative of childbearing potential. Some cultures value a lean look in men, while others value a more muscular shape.

Physical attractiveness, in general, is a stereotype that carries positive expectations. What are some examples?

Love, Sweet Love

The word *love* is used to describe everything from feelings toward a mate or a child to feelings toward a food, one's country, or a good movie. Most commonly, *love* describes strong feelings of attachment, affection, and mutual attraction shared by two people. Psychologist Robert Sternberg has proposed a triangular model of love, as shown in the diagram below, based on **three** characteristics:

1. **Intimacy**—Closeness, mutual concern, and a sharing of feelings.
2. **Passion**—Feelings of romantic or sexual attraction.
3. **Commitment**—A couple's recognition of and dedication to the desire to be together "for better or worse."

He then went on to define six types of love based on various combinations of these three characteristics. *Infatuation*, Sternberg said, was passion alone. *Empty love* was commitment alone. *Liking* was intimacy alone. *Compassionate love* occurs when intimacy and commitment are both present. *Romantic love* is the combination of intimacy and passion. Finally *fatuous love* is the combination of passion and commitment. You could say that true love exists when all three characteristics are present in both partners.

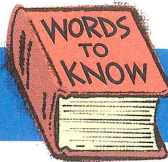
Chapter 18 Wrap-up

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: COGNITION

The role of others in the development of a sense of self is complex and, some would say, essential. As children mature, they look to reference groups for answers to questions such as “What are my personal boundaries?” “Who is ‘our kind’ and who is not?” and “What do I want vs. what does the group want?” Our schemas related to social interactions continue to become enriched through language. Those schemas determine what we perceive in an interaction, how we behave, and what we expect to happen in the interaction.

We attribute causes to our own behaviors and those of others and develop beliefs and attitudes about others. Some attitudes can become prejudices and lead to discrimination. More positive attitudes include attraction and love.

Psychology



attitudes—beliefs and feelings about people, objects, or events that cause us to behave in certain ways. p. 305

attribution theory—theory that we tend to explain behavior in terms of internal personality traits or external factors. p. 302

cognitive dissonance—emotional state that results when a person’s attitude and behavior are not consistent. p. 306

discrimination—unfair treatment of individuals because they are members of a particular group. p. 309

personal identity—sense one has of oneself as different from others, it includes thoughts and emotions, particularly self-knowledge and evaluation. p. 300

prejudice—unfounded and generally negative attitude toward a group of people. p. 308

reference groups—those people or groups of people whose opinions we care about. p. 299

self-fulfilling prophecy—an expectation that is met as a result of itself. p. 302

self-schemas—cognitive structures that allow us to differentiate ourselves from others. p. 299

social comparison—comparing of ourselves to others to learn the typical values and behaviors of a group and to determine how we differ from the group. p. 299

social identity—how one is known in the world. It is made up of the impressions one makes, what others think of him or her, and attractiveness or popularity with a group. p. 300

social psychology—field that studies how individuals influence each other. p. 297

stereotype—set of distorted, generalized beliefs about a group of people. p. 307