

Key Questions/ Chapter Outline

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Psychology Matters

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chapter 11

social psychology



While reading the Sunday newspaper, Bill notices that a prestigious university is recruiting people to participate in a psychological study designed to help people improve their memory. He decides to volunteer for what seems like an interesting and worthwhile experiment, for which he will also get paid a fee. On his arrival at the university's laboratory, Bill is greeted by the researcher and introduced to a second applicant named Douglas. The experimenter explains that the research study will test a new method of improving people's learning and memory—by punishing them for their errors. "We know," he says, "from earlier research by psychologist B. F. Skinner and other behaviorists that positive reinforcement for correct responding is a key to developing animal and human memory. We now want to test whether punishing someone for incorrect responses will have a similar effect."

The task is straightforward: Bill will play the role of the "Teacher" and give Douglas, the "Learner," a set of word pairings to memorize in a given time period. Every time

that the Learner provides the correct answer, the Teacher gives him a verbal reward, “Good” or “That’s right.” When wrong, the Teacher is to press a lever on the impressive-looking shock apparatus that delivers an immediate shock to punish the error.

The shock generator has 30 switches, starting from a low level of only 15 volts and increasing in intensity all the way up to 450 volts. The control panel indicates both the voltage level of each of the switches and a corresponding description of that level. For instance, the 25th level (375 volts) is labeled “Danger, Severe Shock,” and at the 29th and 30th levels (435 and 450 volts) the control panel is simply marked with an ominous XXX. The experimenter goes on to note that every time the Learner makes a mistake, the Teacher must press the next higher level voltage switch.

The Learner is escorted into an adjacent room, where his arms are strapped down and an electrode is attached to his right wrist. The shock generator in the next room will deliver the shocks to the Learner—if and when he makes any errors. Doug mentions that he has a slight heart condition and hopes the shocks will not hurt him much. He is reassured not to worry, that the shocks may become strong but will not cause any permanent damage. Bill administers the test material and communicates over the intercom to Doug, while the Experimenter stands near him.

Initially, Doug performs well, getting rewarding praise from Bill. However, he soon starts making errors, for which Bill immediately starts pressing those shock switches. As Doug messes up more and more, the shock levels are going up, and he complains that the shocks are starting to hurt. At 75 volts, he moans and groans; at 150 volts, the tenth level, Doug has had enough and demands to be released from the experiment. Bill looks anxiously at the Experimenter, who nods that he must continue. As the shock levels increase in intensity, so do the Learner’s screams, as well as his reminder that he has a heart condition. Bill is now really distressed: “Sir, who will be responsible if anything happens to that man?” The Experimenter dismisses his concern about personal responsibility by declaring, “I will be fully responsible, now continue your task, Teacher.” More trials, more shocks, more screams from the next room. Bill hesitates, questioning whether he should go on, but the Experimenter insists that he has no choice but to do so.

At 300 volts, the Learner demands to be freed and complains louder about his heart condition. Bill has had enough, he verbally dissents, “I can’t continue to hurt him, sir, I refuse to go on.” The Experimenter calmly insists that Bill must continue because he has a contract to complete the experimental procedure.

Reluctantly, Bill goes on punishing Doug for his errors until he reaches the level of 330 volts. Bill hears screams, a thud, and then silence from the shock chamber. “He is not responding; someone should go in there to see if he is all right.” But the Experimenter is impassive and tells Bill, “If the learner doesn’t answer in a reasonable time, about 5 seconds, consider it wrong,” because errors of omission (failing to respond) must be punished in the same way as errors of commission—that is The Rule you must obey.

As Bill continues to give the next test stimulus, there is no response from his pupil, Doug. Bill complains louder that it doesn’t make sense for him to continue under these circumstances. However, nothing he says gets the Experimenter to allow him to exit from this unexpectedly distressing situation. Instead, he is told to mind his business, to simply follow the rules because Bill’s job as Teacher is to keep posing the test items and shocking the Learner’s errors—even if it means going all the way up the scale to the full and final 450 volts.

How do you think you would act if you were in Bill’s seat as the Teacher in this memory experiment? At what shock level would you absolutely refuse to continue?

Most of us believe that we would have verbally dissented, then disobeyed behaviorally, and just walked out. You would never sell out your morality for few dollars!

This experiment was actually conducted by a young social psychologist named Stanley Milgram back in 1963, at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, where he was a new assistant professor. He tested more than 500 ordinary citizens from all walks of life (none were students) and discovered that two out of every three Teachers (65%) went all the way up to the maximum shock level of 450 volts. You will read more about Milgram's experiment later in this chapter, but for now let's examine what this experiment tells us about human nature.

PROBLEM: What makes ordinary people harm other people, as they did in this shocking experiment?

It is equally important to realize that although the majority obeyed fully, there was a minority who did refuse to give into this unjust authority. We then want to consider what makes people help others, come to the aid of the distressed, volunteer their time and services, and even act heroically?

Welcome to **social psychology**, the field that investigates how individuals affect each other. It may be a relief to hear that not all of social psychology brings such bad news about ourselves as does this experiment on obedience to authority. The exciting field of psychology also explores the forces that bring people together for friendships and loving relationships, as well for cooperation and conflict resolution. As you study social psychology in this chapter, you will learn how people's thoughts, feelings, perceptions, motives, and behavior are influenced by interactions with others. Social psychologists try to understand behavior within its social context. Defined broadly, the **social context** includes the real, imagined, or symbolic presence of other people; the activities and interactions that take place among people; the settings in which behavior occurs; and the expectations and social norms governing behavior in a given setting (Sherif, 1981). Simply put, social psychologists study the person in her or his behavioral context. They are curious to discover the interrelationships between the person and the situation, how individual personality and character may affect behavior in social settings, and also how they are in turn influenced by factors in the social situation. Of course, such a focus includes investigating group behavior, such as teamwork and conformity, as well as group prejudice and terrorism.

Most of all, the obedience research underscores *the power of social situations to control human behavior*. This is a major theme to emerge from social psychological research of the past 50 years. In the first part of this chapter, you will see how seemingly minor features of social settings can have a huge impact on what we think and how we feel and act. In these studies you will see how the situation can produce conformity to group standards—even when the group is clearly “wrong.”

Yet, as powerful as any situation can be, psychologists know that it is not only objective reality to which we respond. It is not just the physical size and shape and color of a room that might affect how we act when in it; rather, we respond to our subjective interpretation of the situation—to our personal *perception*—of what it means to us. Thus, the same physical setting can differ significantly from person to person, and it can change over time as we experience it differently. You know this intuitively from how you came to like or dislike your homeroom in grade school, your dorm room, or even the psychology classroom from day one to now. This, then, is the second important theme in social psychology: *the personal construction of a subjective social reality*. We

Social psychology The branch of psychology that studies the effects of social variables and cognitions on individual behavior and social interactions.

Social context The combination of (a) people, (b) the activities and interactions among people, (c) the setting in which behavior occurs, and (d) the expectations and social norms governing behavior in that setting.

must grasp this world of expectations and perceptions to understand the attractive forces at work in building friendships and romantic relationships as well as the repulsive forces underlying violence, prejudice, and discrimination.

In the third part of this chapter, we inquire *who or what creates various situations and maintains them*, such as prisons, gangs, cults, torture centers, and other settings that have an impact on human behavior. Initially, we will focus on research that highlights the ways that *situations* matter in influencing how we think, feel, and act. Next, we expand our perspective to highlight the ways that *systems* matter in creating, maintaining, and justifying various life situations, for better or for worse. A classroom where bullying is taking place would be a *situation*, a behavioral context, whereas the *system* would be the school administration and its policies and procedures. We will also see how social psychologists have experimented with altering the situation to change subjective social reality that, in turn, helps to promote the human condition. Sometimes that also involves ways to change systems from destructive or unproductive to constructive and engaging. That is a lofty goal of many social psychologists who are hard at work to help realize it in many domains.

We begin now with the first of these three themes, the power of the situation, and we are delighted to share with you what we consider to be some of the most interesting research in all of psychology.

11.1 KEY QUESTION

HOW DOES THE SOCIAL SITUATION AFFECT OUR BEHAVIOR?

Imagine you find yourself in an interview for great summer job, with the possibility of being hired as an intern at Google.com. During the interview, the interviewer tries to break the ice by telling an off-color sexual joke that you personally find a bit offensive. Do you let him know what you are feeling, or do you laugh? Afterward, he suggests that you go to lunch together in the company cafeteria. Because the lunch is free, do you go all out and order a full-course meal with some good wine, or a simpler healthier one? Do you start the conversation or wait for him to direct it? Do you gulp down your favorite dessert before the soup that is less appealing to you? After you cut the meat, will you shift your fork from your left hand to your right hand as you put the food you cut into your mouth, or do you stick with it in your left hand? Even in this simple social situation, there are many social and cultural rules governing what is appropriate and acceptable behavior. If you are like most people in an unfamiliar situation such as this, you will take your cues of what is the “right” thing to do from those around you. The interviewer essentially sets the table for the conversation, and you follow suit, as well as order the kind of meal he is having, and pretend to like his off-color joke. You want the job and therefore are more compliant than you might be otherwise. Europeans do not switch hands, as Americans do, when eating, a habit learned in family settings by observing others, rarely being told to do so. Desserts, however desirable, come last in the eating sequence.

The power of situations to dominate our personalities and override our past history of learning, values, and beliefs is greatest when we are enmeshed in new settings. The more novel the situation, the less we rely on our past habitual ways of responding and call into action our usually automatic cognitive biases. We look to others to define for us what is necessary to behave in ways others will find acceptable and appropriate. But what is acceptable in your first visit to a church service or a funeral will be quite different from your first experience with fraternity hazing or at a rock concert “mosh pit.” We will see that the pressures of these social situations can have powerful psychological effects, getting us to do things we might never do ordinarily—even immoral, unethical, and illegal actions. Those pressures were operating on Bill when he was acting the role of

“Teacher” in Milgram’s obedience experiment leading him to deliver extremely painful shocks to an innocent, likeable “Learner.” Social roles, situational rules, how we are dressed, whether we are anonymous or highly visible, if we are in a competition, or the mere presence of others can all profoundly influence how we behave. Often, these subtle situational variables affect us in many ways even without our awareness. They may guide our actions in mindless ways. Our Core Concept emphasizes this point:

We usually adapt our behavior to the demands of the social situation, and in new or ambiguous situations we take our cues from the behavior of others in that setting.

core
concept

In this section, we will review some research that explores this concept, called *situationism*. **Situationism** assumes that the external environment, or the behavioral context, can have both subtle and forceful effects on people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Situationism is contrasted with *dispositionism*, the tendency to attribute behavior to internal factors, such as genes, personality traits, and character qualities. **Dispositionism** is the tendency to look within the individual actor for explanations of why someone acted in a particular way. Social psychologists argue that such a tendency has limited our appreciation of the extent to which social situations offer the better explanation for that behavior. Of course, it is not a matter of either-or, but usually there is an interaction between dispositional tendencies and situational forces to shape the final behavior that we observe and want to understand. Here we will look particularly at the power of the situation to create conformity, obedience, mindless groupthink, and the failure to help others in distress.

Social Standards of Behavior

A job interview, such as the one described above, provides an example of a situational influence on your behavior as you try to do “what is right” in front of your prospective employer, sometimes to do anything to get that prized job. You will also notice the power of the situation when you compare the way students talk to their friends versus their professors or how you act at family dinners versus watching favorite TV programs with your pals. Most people learn to size up their social circumstances and conform their behavior to situational demands. The responses most people make depend heavily on two factors, the *social roles* they play and *social norms* of the group. Let us look at both of these closely.

Social Roles and Social Norms How do you go about answering the basic question: Who are you? One answer might be: I am a student, work part-time at a store, firstborn in a big family, religious, patriotic, a cyclist, musician, good friend, and occasional spammer. Each of those descriptors become a *social role* you play in your personal life drama. People from a culture that is more focused on collective values than individual values might answer the “Who am I?” question with: I am a sister, a part of family X, of member or tribe Y. A **social role** is one of several socially defined patterns of behavior that are expected of persons in a given setting or group. The roles you assume may result from your interests, abilities, and goals—or they may be imposed on you by the group or by cultural, economic, or biological conditions beyond your control. In any case, social roles prescribe your behavior by making obvious what you should do, how you should do it, when, where, and why. Some roles are organized around our gender, such as women being more likely to be caregivers for children and the elderly. Other key roles are organized around family activities, such as plans vacations, takes out trash, cooks, sets table, repairs broken things. Occupations are filled with many roles, such as receptionist, union organizer, manager, claims agent, and more.

The situations in which you live and function also determine the roles that are available to you and the behaviors others expect of you. Being a college stu-

Situationism The view that environmental conditions may influence people’s behavior as much or more than their personal dispositions do, under some circumstances.

Dispositionism A psychological orientation that focuses primarily on the inner characteristics of individuals, such as personality dispositions, values, character, and genetic makeup. Contrasted with situationism, the focus is on external causes of behavior.

Social role A socially defined pattern of behavior that is expected of persons in a given setting or group.

dent, for example, is a social role that carries certain implicit assumptions about attending classes, studying, and handing in papers before deadline. It also implies a certain degree of privilege, of usually not having to work full time, and of being interested in improving how your mind works and also your career options. In addition, the adoption of this role makes other roles less likely. Thus, your role as college student diminishes the chances that you will assume the role of homeless person, drug pusher, or witch doctor, for example. But more mature students might head their own family, hold full-time jobs, be returning veterans, and be social-political activists.

In addition to specific social roles that individuals enact, groups develop many “unwritten rules” for the ways that all members should act. Gangs may demand unquestioned obedience to their leader and a willingness to fight or kill anyone designated as the enemy. Male executives in technology businesses usually do not wear ties and often wear jeans to work, which would be the wrong attire in other business settings. Muslim women students may wear veils to class (as a religious statement). People from some cultures greet each other by kissing on the cheek in a fixed order, right then left, and in Poland add a third kiss for good measure. These expectations, called **social norms**, dictate socially appropriate attitudes and behaviors in particular behavioral settings. Social norms can be broad guidelines, such as ideas about which political or religious attitudes are considered acceptable. Social norms can also be quite specific, embodying standards of conduct such as being quiet in the library or shining your shoes for a job interview. Norms can guide conversation, as when they restrict discussion of sensitive or taboo subjects in the presence of certain company. And norms can define dress codes, whether requiring uniforms or business suits or prohibiting shorts and tank tops. Some norms exist in unwritten rules that are built into various situations, such as when teachers are lecturing, students are expected to listen and not talk simultaneously. However, what about the norms governing your behavior in elevators? We bet you always face the front of the elevator and either stop talking to a friend or talk lower when others are there as well. Why? Where are those rules written? How did you learn them? What will happen the next time when you enter an elevator filled with other people and you face the rear? Try that little experiment and see how others react. Or try sitting down when everyone stands up for the national anthem. To know if a social norm is operating, just try to violate it and check out the reactions of others in that same setting. If they express distress of some kind, you broke the norm.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 3

Bandura demonstrated that we acquire many social behaviors through observational learning.

Social norms A group’s expectations regarding what is appropriate and acceptable for its members’ attitudes and behaviors.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 5

Schemas are cognitive structures that integrate knowledge and expectations about a topic or concept.

When a person joins a new group, such as a work group or a group of friends, there is always an adjustment period during which the individual tries to discover how best to fit in. Adjustment to a group typically involves discovering its social norms. Individuals experience this adjustment in two ways: by first noticing the *uniformities* and *regularities* in certain behaviors, and then by observing the *negative consequences* when someone violates a social norm.

For example, a new student in your school who carries books and notes in an attaché case will be seen as “out of it” if backpacks are in, and vice versa in other schools. The same is true of dress codes, which are rarely explicit but can guide how almost everyone dresses. Guys wearing baseball caps backward or sideways would have been laughed at a generation ago, before they were “in.” The same is now true with athletes wearing diamond earrings or flashy body tattoos. Also, elaborate handshake rituals among some guys have replaced the “old-fashioned” simple hand-in-hand.

Schemas and Scripts Recall the way in which we form schemas to help organize lots of information and for guiding our actions. A *schema* is a cluster of related concepts that provides a general conceptual framework for thinking about a topic, an event, an object, a person, or a situation in one’s life. Once a schema is formed, it enables us to make predictions about what to expect in various settings. It is often upsetting when one of our schemas is violated and fails to predict the

expected. Imagine going into a (non-fast food) restaurant, ordering your meal, and getting the bill before any food appears. Imagine that the waitperson brings the dessert first, then the main course, then the appetizer. Violation of expectation! Schemas become “shoulds” about how people ought to behave in certain settings; and when they do not, this provokes negative reactions, when we assume that person must be sharing our schema. The restaurant example involved a violation of an event schema or script. A **script** involves a person’s knowledge about the *sequence* of events and actions that is expected of a particular social role in a given setting.

Social Norms Influence Students’ Political Views Can the political views of faculty influence those of their students? Social psychologist Theodore Newcomb posed this question. The college: Vermont’s Bennington College. The time: the 1930s. The students: women from wealthy, conservative homes with decidedly conservative values. The faculty: young, dynamic, and liberal. Bennington’s campus culture had a prevailing norm of political and economic liberalism. The researcher wondered: Which forces most shape the attitudes of these students, their family’s or their faculty’s? His data showed that the immediately present norms of the campus won the war of influence against the remote norms of the family. In most women, their initial attitude of conservatism was transformed as they progressed through their college years, so that by their senior year they had clearly converted to liberal thinking and causes (Newcomb, 1943). But was that shift in attitudes enduring?

Twenty years later, the social influence of the Bennington experience was still evident. Women who had graduated as liberals were still liberals; the minority who had resisted the prevailing liberal norm had remained conservative. This was accomplished in part by each of them marrying their “own kind” politically. Most of the women had married husbands with values similar to their own—either liberal or conservative—and created supportive new home environments that sustained those different ideologies. The liberal Bennington allegiance was evident in the 1960 presidential election, when 60% of the class Newcomb had investigated voted for liberal John Kennedy, rather than conservative Richard Nixon—in contrast to less than 30% support for Kennedy among graduates of comparable colleges at that time (Newcomb et al., 1967).

Campus culture is not the only source of norms and group pressure, of course. One’s workplace, neighborhood, religious group, and family all communicate standards for behavior—and threaten sanctions (such as firing, social rejection, or excommunication) for violating those norms. But a high school, college, or university environment can have a powerful impact on young people. This is especially true if they have had narrow life experiences and had not previously encountered attitudes radically different from their own. For example, new college students commonly adopt classmates’ political opinions, as in the Bennington study, and also frequently take on religious beliefs of classmates, as well as attitudes about sex and alcohol (see Prentice & Miller, 1993; Schroeder & Prentice, 1995).

Conformity

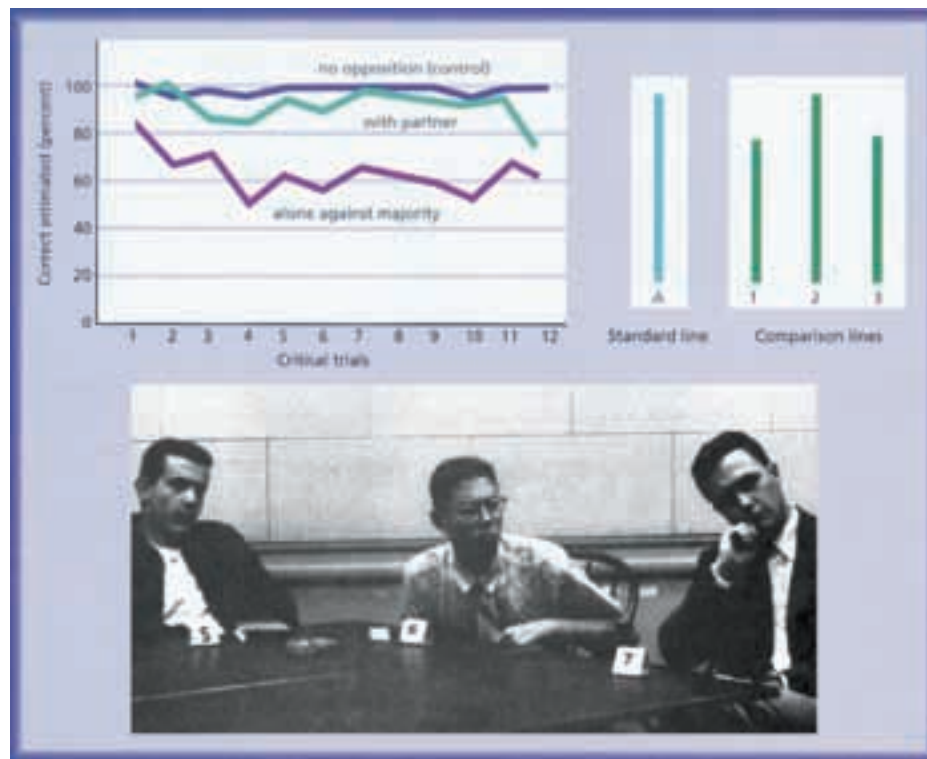
How powerful are these social pressures? We can see the effects of social pressure in people’s moods, clothing styles, and leisure activities (Totterdell, 2000; Totterdell et al., 1998). This tendency to mimic other people is called the **chameleon effect**, after the animal that changes its skin color to fit into its varied environments (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). We have seen how social pressure in political attitudes influenced Bennington College students. But can social influence be strong enough to make people follow a group norm that is clearly and objectively wrong? Could the power of that situation prove stronger than the evidence of your own eyes? Could a group of strangers get you to see the world through their distorted eyes?

Script Knowledge about the sequence of events and actions that is expected in a particular setting.

Chameleon effect The tendency to mimic other people, named after the animal that changes its skin color to fit into its varied environments.

FIGURE 11.1**Conformity in the Asch experiments**

In this photo from Asch's study, the naive individual, number 6, displays obvious concern about the majority's erroneous judgment. At top right, you see a typical stimulus array. At top left, the graph illustrates conformity across 12 critical trials, when individuals were grouped with a unanimous majority or had the support of a single dissenting partner. (A lower percentage of correct estimates indicates a greater degree of conformity with the group's false judgment.)



The Asch Effect Solomon Asch (1940, 1956) set out to answer just such questions by having a group of his confederates challenge the perception of individual students by making them think that their eyes were deceiving them. (Some researchers use confederates as their assistants who act as regular participants to either model some behavior or try to influence the behavior of the actual participant.) In Asch's study, male college students were told they would be participating in a study of visual perception. They were shown cards with three lines of differing lengths and asked to indicate which of the three lines was the same length as a separate, standard line. (See Figure 11.1.) The problem was simple: The lines were different enough so that mistakes were rare when volunteers responded alone. But when those same individuals were put in a group of other students who had been coached to give wrong answers, then everything changed.

Here's how the experiment worked. On the first three trials, everyone agreed on the correct answer. But the first person to respond on the fourth trial reported an obviously incorrect judgment, reporting as equal two lines that were clearly different. So did the next person and so on, until all members of the group but the remaining one (the only real subject in the experiment) had unanimously agreed on an erroneous judgment. That person then had to decide whether to go along with everyone else's view of the situation and conform or remain independent, standing by the objective evidence of his own eyes. This group pressure was imposed on 12 of the 18 trials.

What did he and other participants in his position finally do? As you might expect, nearly everyone showed signs of disbelief and discomfort when faced with a majority who saw the world so differently from the way he did. But despite his distress, the group pressure usually prevailed. Three-quarters of those subjected to group pressure conformed to the false judgment of the group one or more times, while only one-fourth remained completely independent on all trials. In various related studies, between 50 and 80% conformed with the majority's false estimate at least once; a third yielded to the majority's wrong judgments on half

or more of the critical trials. Pressure to conform to the group standard won over pressure to believe what one's eyes and brain were reporting to the mind.

Social psychologists call this the **Asch effect**: the influence of a group majority on the judgments of an individual. The Asch effect has become the classic illustration of **conformity**—the tendency for people to adopt the behavior and opinions presented by other group members. Even though individuals were judging matters of fact, not merely personal opinions, most caved in to conformity pressures.

At the same time, we should recognize that the Asch effect, powerful as it is, still does not make everyone conform. Conformity researchers do regularly find “independents,” individuals who are bothered and even dismayed to find themselves in disagreement with the majority but who nonetheless stand their ground and “call ‘em as they see ‘em”—even to the point of deliberately giving a wrong answer when the group gives a correct one (Friend et al., 1990). As we will see in a host of other studies in this chapter, more often than not the majority conforms, complies, and gives up personal standards for group standards.

Group Characteristics That Produce Conformity In further experiments, Asch identified three factors that influence whether a person will yield to group pressure: (1) the size of the majority, (2) the presence of a partner who dissented from the majority, and (3) the size of the discrepancy between the correct answer and the majority's position. He found that individuals tended to conform with a unanimous majority of as few as three people but not if they faced only one or two. However, even in a large group, giving the person one ally who dissented from the majority opinion sharply reduced conformity (as shown in Figure 11.1). With such a “partner,” nearly all subjects resisted the pressures to conform. Remarkably, however, some individuals continued to yield to the group even with a partner present. All who yielded later underestimated the influence of the social pressure and the frequency of their conformity; a few even claimed that they really had seen the lines as the majority had claimed so were not conforming, but were only reporting accurately what they were seeing (Asch, 1955, 1956). The Asch effect is the demonstration of a group's conformity impact on an individual's perception and judgments. Numerous studies have revealed additional factors that influence conformity. (These experiments have included both females and males.) Specifically, a person is more likely to conform under the following circumstances:

- When a judgment task is difficult or ambiguous (Saltzstein & Sandberg, 1979).
- When the group members are perceived as especially competent.
- When their responses are given publicly rather than privately.
- When the group majority is unanimous—but once that unanimity is broken, the rate of conformity drops dramatically (Allen & Levine, 1969; Morris & Miller, 1975).

So now imagine you are about to vote openly in a group, as is common in clubs or on boards of directors. You will probably conform to the group majority if: (a) the issue being decided is complex or confusing, (b) others in the group seem to know what they are talking about, (c) you must vote by raising your hand instead of casting an anonymous ballot, (d) the entire group casting their votes before you all vote in a certain way, and especially if (e) the leader votes first.

Being informed about such conformity pressures should make you wiser about how you might go along with the group even when they are heading in a wrong or even immoral direction. Resisting such influence requires critical thinking and being mindful of what you have learned about the power of social forces.

Asch effect A form of conformity in which a group majority influences individual judgments of unambiguous stimuli, as with line judgments.

Conformity The tendency for people to adopt the behaviors, attitudes, and opinions of other members of a group.

In the Asch effect, people conform because of *normative influences*, wanting to be accepted, approved, liked, and not to be rejected by others. Another reason for conformity comes from *informational influences*, wanting to be correct and to understand the correct way to act in any given situation.

The Autokinetic Effect A classic experiment, conducted by Muzafer Sherif (1935), demonstrated how informational influence can lead to norm formation and internalization of that new norm. Participants were asked to judge the amount of movement of a spot of light, which was actually stationary but that appeared to move when viewed in total darkness with no reference points. This is a perceptual illusion known as the **autokinetic effect**. Originally, individual judgments varied widely. However, when the participants were brought together in a group consisting of strangers and stated their judgments aloud, their estimates began to converge. They began to see the light move in the same direction and in similar amounts. Even more interesting was the final part of Sherif's study—when alone in the same darkened room after the group viewing, these participants continued to follow the group norm that had emerged when they were together.

Once norms are established in a group, they tend to perpetuate themselves. In later research, these autokinetic group norms persisted even when tested a year later when the former participants were retested alone—without former group members witnessing the judgments (Rohrer et al., 1954). Norms can be transmitted from one generation of group members to the next and can continue to influence people's behavior long after the original group that created the norm no longer exists (Insko et al., 1980). How do we know that norms can have transgenerational influence? In autokinetic effect studies, researchers replaced one group member with a new one after each set of autokinetic trials until all the members of the group were new to the situation. The group's autokinetic norm remained true to the one handed down to them across several successive generations (Jacobs & Campbell, 1961). Do you see how this experiment captures the processes that allow real-life norms to be passed down across generations?

Conformity and Independence Light Up the Brain Differently New technology, not available in Asch's day, offers intriguing insights into the role of the brain in social conformity. When people conform, are they rationally deciding to go along with the group out of normative needs, or are they actually changing their perceptions and accepting the validity of the new, though erroneous, information provided by the group? A recent study used advanced brain-scanning technology to answer this question. It also answers the question of whether the old Asch effect could work with the current generation of more sophisticated students. (A peek ahead says, "Yes.")

Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), researchers can now peer into the active brain as a person engages in various tasks and detect which specific brain regions are energized as they carry out these tasks. Understanding what mental functions those brain regions control tells us what it means when they are activated by any given experimental task.

Here's how the study worked. Imagine that you are one of 32 volunteers recruited for a study of perception. You have to mentally rotate images of three-dimensional objects to determine if the objects are the same or different from a standard object. In the waiting room, you meet four other volunteers, with whom you begin to bond by practicing games on laptop computers, taking photos of one another, and chatting. They are really actors, "confederates" who will soon be faking their answers on the test trials so that they are in agreement with each other, but not with the correct responses that you generate. You are selected as the one to go into the scanner while the others outside look at the objects first as a group and then decide if they are same or different. As in Asch's original experiment, the actors unanimously give wrong answers on some trials, correct answers on others, with occasional mixed-group answers thrown in to make the test more believable. On each round, when it is your turn at bat, you are shown

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 2

Neuroscientists use *brain scanning* as a technique for studying specific brain areas activated by different mental tasks.

Autokinetic effect The perceived motion of a stationary dot of light in a totally dark room. Used by Muzafer Sherif to study the formation of group norms.

the answers given by the others. You have to decide if the objects are the same or different—as the group assessed them or as you saw them.

As in Asch's experiments, you (as the typical subject) would have caved in to group pressure, on average giving the group's wrong answers 41% of the time. When you yielded to the group's erroneous judgment, your conformity would have been seen in the brain scan as changes in selected regions of the brain's cortex dedicated to vision and spatial awareness (specifically, activity increases in the right intraparietal sulcus). Surprisingly, there would be no changes in areas of the forebrain that deal with monitoring conflicts, planning, and other higher-order mental activities. On the other hand, if you made independent judgments that went against the group, then your brain lit up in the areas that are associated with emotional salience (the right amygdala and right caudate nucleus regions). This means that resistance creates an emotional burden for those who maintain their independence—autonomy comes at a psychic cost.

The lead author of this research, neuroscientist Gregory Berns (2005), concludes that “We like to think that seeing is believing, but the study's findings show that seeing is believing what the group tells you to believe.” This means that other people's views, when crystallized into a group consensus, can actually affect how we perceive important aspects of the external world, thus calling into question the nature of truth itself. It is only by becoming aware of our vulnerability to social pressure that we can begin to build resistance to conformity when it is not in our best interest to yield to the mentality of the herd.

It is also important to mention that this research using neurobiology techniques to study social psychological processes is becoming widespread in the field of social psychology, and is known as **social neuroscience**. Social neuroscience is a new area of research that uses methodologies from brain sciences to investigate various types of social behavior, such as stereotyping in prejudice, attitudes, self-control, and emotional regulation (Azar, 2002a; Cacioppo & Brentson, 2005).

Groupthink Groups themselves can also be pressured to conform. This important social psychological process that encourages conformity in the thinking and decision making of individuals when they are in groups, like committees, has been termed **groupthink** by psychologist Irving Janis (1972; Janis & Mann, 1977). In groupthink, members of the group attempt to conform their opinions to what each believes to be the consensus of the group. This conformity bias leads the group to take actions on which each member might normally consider to be unwise. Five conditions likely to promote groupthink are:

- Directive leadership, a dominant leader.
- High group **cohesiveness**, with absence of dissenting views.
- Lack of norms requiring methodical procedures for evidence collection/evaluation.
- Homogeneity of members' social background and ideology.
- High stress from external threats with low hope of a better solution than that of the group leader.

This concept was first developed to help understand bad decisions made by the U.S. government regarding the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Vietnam War, and especially the disastrous invasion of Cuba's Bay of Pigs. In that case, really smart members of President John Kennedy's cabinet made a foolish decision to start an invasion against Cuba based on faulty reports by anti-Castro Cuban refugees. Later, others have cited groupthink as a factor that contributed to the faulty decisions in the space shuttle disasters, the bankruptcy of Enron Corporation, and, more recently, the 2003 decision to wage preemptive war against Iraq (see Schwartz & Wald, 2003). The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee investigating the justifications for the Iraq War cited groupthink as

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 5

Our judgments and decisions are often affected by personal biases.

Social neuroscience An area of research that uses methodologies from brain sciences to investigate various types of social behavior, such as stereotyping in prejudice, attitudes, self-control, and emotional regulation.

Groupthink The term for the poor judgments and bad decisions made by members of groups that are overly influenced by perceived group consensus or the leader's point of view.

Cohesiveness Solidarity, loyalty, and a sense of group membership.

one of the processes involved in that decision. It is interesting to note the use of this social psychological concept in an official report of that government committee:

The Intelligence Community (IC) has long struggled with the need for analysts to overcome analytic biases. . . . This bias that pervaded both the IC's analytic and collection communities represents "group think," a term coined by psychologist Irving Janis in the 1970's to describe a process in which a group can make bad or irrational decisions as each member of the group attempts to conform their opinions to what they believe to be the consensus of the group. IC personnel involved in the Iraq WMD issue demonstrated several aspects of groupthink: examining few alternatives, selective gathering of information, pressure to conform within the group or withhold criticism, and collective rationalization. (U.S. Senate, 2004, p. 4)

Recently, the U.S. Directorate of Intelligence has found a way of minimizing the risk of groupthink by developing "Red Teams" whose task is to challenge all decisions with more reliable evidence. They insist on convergence of multiple sources of independent evidence to support all action-based decisions by government agencies. Former CIA Director Porter Goss has encouraged innovation and creativity in how the CIA approaches its mission. In a report outlining the new defenses against mindless groupthink, Gross has said:

The primary criticism was that our analysts were "too wedded to their assumptions" and that our tradecraft—the way we analyze a subject and communicate our findings—needed strengthening. . . . Above all, we seek to foster in each analyst a sense of individual initiative, responsibility and ownership, as well as the recognition that providing analysis vital to our national security requires challenging orthodoxy and constantly testing our assumptions. Mastering the fundamentals of tradecraft and building expertise are critical, but we also must aspire to a level of creativity and insight that allows us to look beyond the obvious and flag the unexpected. Only then can we truly fulfill our obligation to help protect the American people. (See Kringen, 2006)

Obedience to Authority

So far, we have seen how groups influence individuals. But the arrow of influence also points the other way: Certain individuals, such as charismatic leaders and authorities, can command the obedience of groups—even large masses of people. The ultimate demonstration of this effect was seen in the World War II era, with the emergence of Adolph Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy. These dictators transformed the rational citizens of whole nations into mindlessly loyal followers of a fascist ideology bent on world conquest. But the same was true in Cambodia in the 1970s where Pol Pot, the brutal dictator and leader of the Khmer Rouge, decided to eliminate social classes by forcing everyone to work on farms. Those likely to resist—the educated, intellectuals, and foreigners—were tortured, starved to death, and murdered. In a four-year reign of terror, known as the Killing Fields of Cambodia, nearly 2 million people were killed.

Modern social psychology had its origins in this World War II wartime crucible of fear and prejudice. It was natural, then, that many of the early social psychologists focused on the personalities of people drawn into fascist groups. Specifically, they looked for an authoritarian personality behind the fascist group mentality (Adorno et al., 1950). But that dispositional analysis failed to recognize the social, economic, historical, and political realities operating on those populations at that time. To clarify this point, let us reflect for a moment on some more recent examples of unquestioning obedience to authority.

In 1978, a group of American citizens left California to relocate their Protestant religious order, called “Peoples Temple,” in the South American jungle of Guyana. There, following the orders of their charismatic leader, the Reverend Jim Jones, over 900 members of the Peoples Temple willingly administered lethal doses of cyanide to hundreds of their children, then to their parents, and then to themselves. Those who refused were murdered by other members of this cult.

Then, in 1993, 100 members of a religious sect in Waco, Texas, joined their leader, David Koresh, in defying federal agents who had surrounded their compound. After a standoff of several weeks, the Branch Davidians set fire to their quarters rather than surrender. In the resulting conflagration, scores of men, women, and children perished. Four years later, the college-educated members of another group calling itself “Heaven’s Gate” followed their leader’s command to commit mass suicide in order to achieve a “higher plane” of being. And, on September 11, 2001, followers of Osama bin Laden weaponized American commercial airliners and piloted them into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. In addition to murdering thousands of people on those planes and working at those sites, they knowingly committed suicide. And even more recently, scores of suicide bombers, both men and women, have blown themselves apart as “revolutionary martyrs” in the Palestinian campaign against Israel. Were these people mentally deranged, stupid, and totally strange creatures—unlike us? Are there any conditions under which you would blindly obey an order from a person you love and respect (or fear) to do such extreme deeds? Would you, for example, obey an authority figure that told you to electrocute a stranger? Of course, you are saying to yourself, “No way,” “Not me,” “I am not that kind of person.” But think about what each of the people we have described above must have been thinking before they were caught up in their obedience trap—the same thing as you, probably.

Let’s return to our opening story of Bill trapped in the experiment created by social psychologist Stanley Milgram (1965, 1974). His research revealed that the willingness of people to follow the orders of an authority, even potentially lethal ones, is not confined to a few extreme personalities or deranged individuals. This finding, along with certain ethical issues that the experiment raises, places Milgram’s work at the center of one of the biggest controversies in psychology (Blass, 1996). We will look at more of the findings generated by that program of research on *obedience* and visit a series of follow up studies that expand its relevance and applicability to everyday life settings.

Milgram’s Research Revisited Milgram described his experimental procedure to each of 40 psychiatrists and then asked them to estimate the percentage of American citizens who would go to each of the 30 levels in the experiment. On average, they predicted that fewer than 1% would go all the way to the end, that only sadists would engage in such sadistic behavior, and that most people would drop out at the tenth level of 150 volts. They could not have been more wrong! These experts on human behavior were totally wrong for two reasons. (This dual tendency of overestimating person power and underestimating situation power is known as the *fundamental attribution error*.) First, they ignored all the situational determinants of behavior in the procedural description of the experiment. They failed to recognize the significance of the authority power, the roles of Teacher and Learner, the rules, the diffusion of personal responsibility (when the experimenter claimed to the “Teacher” that he would be responsible for anything that might happen to the “Learner”), the definition of what were appropriate



Unquestioning obedience to authority led more than 900 members of a cult community in Jonestown to commit mass suicide, under orders from their leader, the Reverend Jim Jones.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 10

In contrast to most personality theories focusing on *internal* processes as determinants of behavior, social psychology emphasizes the importance of the *external* social situation.



The Milgram Obedience Experiment

The “shock generator” looked ominous, but didn’t actually deliver shocks to the “learner” (middle photo), who was a confederate of the experimenter. The last photo shows the experimenter giving instructions to the “teacher” who is seated in front of the shock generator.

and expected behaviors by the Teacher, and the other social pressures toward obedience.

Second, their training in traditional psychiatry led them to rely too heavily on the dispositional perspective to understand unusual behavior, to look for explanations within the individual’s personality makeup and not in the external behavioral context. Thus, their estimate of only 1% as blindly obedient to authority, as going all the way up to the maximum shock level of 450 volts, is a base rate against which we can assess what actually happened in this research.

Before examining the actual results we need to add that Milgram wanted to show that his results were not due to the authority power of Yale University—which is what New Haven is all about. So he transplanted his laboratory to a rundown office building in downtown Bridgeport, Connecticut, and repeated the experiment as a project of a fictitious, private research firm with no apparent connection to Yale. There he tested another 500 ordinary citizens and added female participants as Teachers to the experimental mix. So what was the actual level of blind obedience to authority?

As we’ve seen, two out of every three (65%) of the volunteers went all the way up the maximum shock level of 450 volts! These “Teachers” shocked their “Learner-victim” over and over again despite his increasingly desperate pleas to stop. This was as true of the young and old, men and women, well educated and less so, and across many occupations and careers.

Variations on an Obedience Theme Over the course of a year, Milgram carried out 19 different experiments—each one a different variation of the basic paradigm of: Experimenter/-Teacher/-Learner/-Memory Testing/-Errors Shocked. In each of these studies he varied one social-psychological variable and observed its impact on the extent of obedience to the authority’s pressure to continue to shock the “Learner-Victim.” He added women in one study, varied the physical proximity or remoteness of either the Experimenter-Teacher link or the Teacher-Learner link, had peers model rebellion or full obedience before the Teacher had his chance to begin, and added more social variations in each experiment.

As can be seen in Figure 11.2, the data for 16 variations clearly reveal the extreme pliability of human nature: Almost everyone could be totally obedient or almost everyone could resist authority pressures. It all depends on how the social situation was constructed by the researcher and experienced by the participants. Milgram was able to demonstrate that compliance rates could soar to over 90% of people administering the 450-volt maximum, or the obedience rate could be reduced to less than 10% by introducing just one crucial social variable into the compliance recipe.

Want maximum obedience? Allow the new Teacher to first observe someone else administering the final shock level. Want people to resist authority

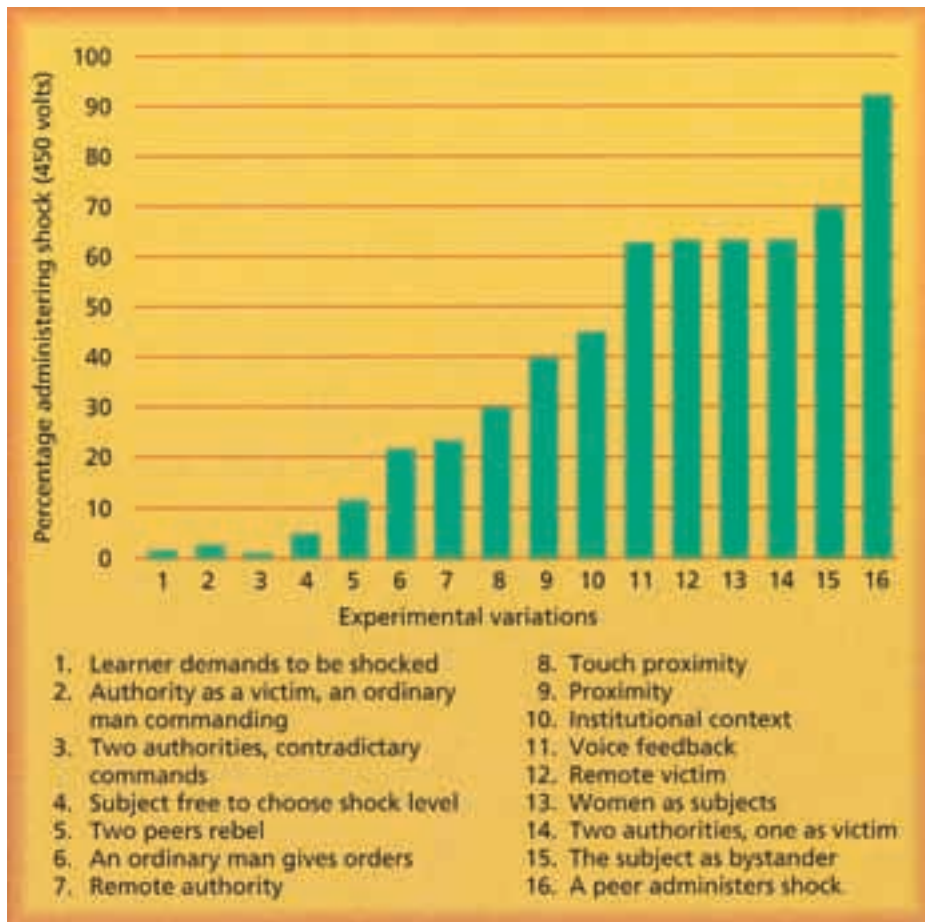


FIGURE 11.2
Obedience in Milgram's Experiments

The graph shows a profile of weak or strong obedience effects across situational variations of Milgram's study of obedience to authority.

(Source: From *The Obedience Experiments: A Case Study of Controversy in the Social Sciences*, by A. G. Miller. Copyright © 1986 by Praeger Publishers, Inc. Reproduced with permission of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., Westport, CT.)

pressures? Provide social models of peers who rebel. Participants also refused to deliver the shocks if the Learner said he wanted to be shocked; that's masochistic, and they are not sadists! They also were reluctant to give high levels of shock when the Experimenter filled in as the Learner, and they were supposed to shock him. They were more likely to shock when the Learner was remote than nearby. In each of the other variations on this diverse range of ordinary American citizens, of widely varying ages, occupations, and of both sexes, it was possible to elicit low, medium, or high levels of compliant obedience with a flick of the Situational Switch—as if one were simply turning a Human Nature Dial within their psyches. This large sample of a thousand ordinary citizens from such varied backgrounds makes the results of *Milgram's Obedience to Authority* studies among the most generalizable in all the social sciences.

Of course, no shocks were ever delivered to the learner. The “victim” of the “shocks” was an accomplished actor who congenially chatted with his “teacher” after the experiment and assured him he was fine and had never felt any shocks. All of his comments during the study had been tape recorded to standardize the procedure across the many trials and variations of the study. Moreover, the powerful authority figure in the gray lab coat was not a “real” authority, not Milgram himself, but a high school biology teacher. And, for all the “Teachers” knew, when once the learner fell silent after the 350 volt shock, he may have been unconscious or dead—but in any case his memory could not be improved by further shocks. Nevertheless, hundreds of people mindlessly obeyed and continued doing as ordered even though it made no sense—had they thought rationally about what they were doing.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 6

Moral judgments depend both on the person's *stage of moral development* and the *situational influences* acting on him or her.



Would you risk your life to defy authority in defense of your beliefs, as this Chinese student did, defying a tank force coming to crush the student rebellion at Tiananmen Square?

British author C. P. Snow reminds us, “When you think of the long and gloomy history of man, you will find more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have been committed in the name of rebellion.”

Such research, and the many replications that followed in countries around the world, challenge our conception that “good people” cannot be seduced into becoming perpetrators of evil. It suggests that the line between good and evil is not fixed and permanent but rather is sufficiently permeable to allow almost anyone to move across from one behavioral realm to the other. It all depends on the power of the new, unfamiliar situation that they face and with which they most cope.

Heroic Defiance This concept of situational power faces one challenge, that of individual heroic defiance. **Heroes** are people who are able to resist situational forces that overwhelm their peers and remain true to their personal values. They are the “whistle-blowers” who challenge corrupt or immoral systems by not going along with the company norm.

An Army Reservist, Joe Darby, exposed the horrendous abuses of prisoners by his buddies at Iraq’s Abu Ghraib Prison in 2004. He showed a CD with the images taken by other MPs on the night shift to a senior investigating officer, who then initiated the investigation that stopped those abuses, which had been going on for months.

But such “heroes” are often despised by their former colleagues and made to pay a high price for not being a silent “team player.” Darby, for example, had to go into hiding under protective custody for three years, along with his wife and mother, because of death threats against him by soldiers in his battalion and by people in their hometown for humiliating the American military in exposing those photos of sadistic abuse of prisoners. After being released in 2007, Darby did finally receive a hero award at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC.

Cross-Cultural Tests of Milgram’s Research

Because of its structural design and its detailed protocol, the basic Milgram obedience experiment encouraged replication by independent investigators in many countries. A recent comparative analysis was made of the rates of obedience across eight studies conducted in the United States and of nine replications in European, African, and Asian countries. There were comparably high levels of compliance by research volunteers in these different studies and nations. The majority obedience effect of a mean 61% found in the U.S. replications was matched by the 66% obedience found across all the other national samples. The range of obedience went from a low of 31 to a high of 91% in the U.S. studies, and from a low of 28% (Australia) to a high of 88% (South Africa) in the cross-national replications. There was also stability of obedience over decades of time as well as over place. There was no association between when a study was done (between 1963 and 1985) and degree of obedience (Blass, 2004).

Using a variation of the Milgram paradigm, researchers in Utrecht University, Holland, and in Palermo University, Sicily, found obedience rates comparable to those in some of Milgram’s experimental variations. The situation they created was that of a coach who had to deliver increasingly critical feedback to his performer when he did poorly, allegedly to build resilience in performers. They had to deliver a series of graded hostile comments, as if they were their own, for each error. Critical feedback given to the Performer consisted of a graded series of increasingly negative comments on his performance and rude remarks about his lack of ability. For example, a mild criticism was “You are going bad . . .” a moderately negative feedback was “You are really ridiculous!” and an extremely negative feedback was “You are really the most stupid person I have ever seen!” Obedience to authority was determined as delivering the full set of 15 hostile comments. In one of the Utrecht studies, more than 90%

Heroes People whose actions help others in emergencies or challenge unjust or corrupt systems, doing so without concern for reward or likely negative consequences for them by acting in deviant ways.

of the students playing the role of coach went all the way (Meeus & Raaijmakers, 1986). In the Sicilian study using that same procedure, obedience was only 30%, but that was in a condition where coach and performer were in close proximity and the experimenter was in an adjacent room. That is exactly what Milgram found for those experimental variations (Bocchiaro & Zimbardo, 2008).

Why Do We Obey Authority? From the many variations Milgram conducted on his original study, we can conclude that people tended to be obedient under the following conditions (Milgram, 1965, 1974; Rosenhan, 1969):

- When a peer modeled obedience by complying with the authority figure's commands.
- When the victim was remote from the Teacher and could not be seen or heard, thereby promoting a sense of anonymity.
- When the Teacher was under direct surveillance of the authority figure so that he was aware of the authority's presence.
- When the authority figure had higher relative status to the Teacher.

What are the lessons to be learned? If you carefully review these conditions (Figure 11.2), you can see that the obedience effect results from situational variables and not personality variables. In fact, personality tests administered to the subjects did not reveal any traits that differentiated those who obeyed from those who refused, nor did they identify any psychological disturbance or abnormality in the obedient punishers. These findings enable us to rule out individual personality as a variable in obedient behavior. Going beyond the experimental findings to applying them to real world settings, we can outline ten basic steps or processes that can seduce ordinary, even good, people to go down the slippery slope of evil, as seen in Table 11.1.

Some Real-World Extensions of the Milgram Obedience to Authority Paradigm

If the relationship between teachers and students is one of power-based authority, how much more so is that between physicians and nurses? To find out, a team of doctors and nurses tested obedience in their authority system by determining whether nurses would follow or disobey an illegitimate request by an unknown physician in a real hospital setting (Hofling et al., 1966). Each of 22 nurses individually received a call from an unknown staff doctor who told her

TABLE 11.1 Ten Steps toward Evil—Getting Good People to Harm Others

- Provide people with an ideology to justify beliefs for actions.
- Make people take a small first step toward a harmful act with a minor, trivial action and then gradually increase those small actions.
- Slowly transform a once compassionate leader into a dictatorial figure.
- Provide people with vague and ever-changing rules.
- Relabel the situation's actors and their actions to legitimize the ideology.
- Provide people with social models of compliance.
- Allow verbal dissent but only if people continue to comply behaviorally with orders.
- Encourage dehumanizing the victim.
- Diffuse responsibility
- Make exiting the situation difficult.



One of the innocent victims of the Authority Hoax, on the witness stand. She received a large settlement from the fast-food company where she worked and had been abused.

to administer a medication to his patient immediately, before he got to the hospital. His order doubled the maximum amount indicated as a high dose. When this dilemma was presented as a hypothetical scenario, 10 of 12 nurses in that hospital said they would refuse to obey because it violated hospital procedures (Krackow & Blass, 1995). However, the power of the situation took over on the hospital ward: Twenty-one of 22 nurses put to the test started to pour the medication (actually a harmless drug) to administer to the patient—before the researcher stopped them from doing so. That solitary disobedient nurse should have been given a raise and a hero's medal.

Another remarkable real-world illustration of the Milgram effect in action comes from a telephone hoax perpetrated in 68 fast-food restaurants across 32 states. Assistant store managers blindly followed the orders of a phone caller, pretending to be a police officer, who insisted that they strip search a young female employee he said had stolen property on her.

The alleged officer instructs the assistant manager to detain the employee in the back room, strip her naked, and search her extensively for the stolen goods. The caller insists on being told in graphic detail what is happening, and all the while the video surveillance cameras are recording these remarkable events as they unfold. In some cases, the abuse escalates to having her masturbate and perform sexual acts on a male assistant who is supposed to guarding her (Wolfson, 2005).

This bizarre authority-influence-in-absentia has seduced dozens of ordinary people in that situation to violate store policy, and presumably their own ethical and moral principles, to molest and humiliate honest young employees. In 2007, the perpetrator was uncovered—a former corrections officer—but freed for lack of direct evidence.

One reasonable reaction to learning about this hoax is to focus on the dispositions of the victim and her assailants, as naïve, ignorant, gullible, weird individuals. However, when we learn that this scam has been carried out successfully in a great many similar settings across many states, in a half dozen different restaurant chains, then our analysis must shift away from simply blaming the victims to recognizing the power of situational forces involved in this scenario.

The Bystander Problem: The Evil of Inaction

The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.
—British Statesman, Edmund Burke

Harm doesn't always come from a hurtful act. It can also come from inaction when someone needs help. We can illustrate this fact with an event that stunned the nation and became a legend about the callousness of human nature. On March 13, 1964, the *New York Times* reported that 38 citizens of Queens watched for more than half an hour as a man with a knife stalked and killed Kitty Genovese, one of their neighbors, in three separate attacks. The article said that the sound of the bystanders' voices and the sudden glow of their bedroom lights twice interrupted the assault, but each time the assailant returned and stabbed her again. Again according to the report, only one witness called the police—after the woman was finally raped and murdered.

The story of Kitty Genovese's murder dominated the news for days, as a shocked nation was served up media commentary that played on the angles of bystander apathy and the indifference of New Yorkers. Why didn't they help? Was it something about New York—or could the same thing happen anywhere?

A recent investigation of police records and other archival materials has found that the real story was different from the original *Times* report (Manning, Levine, & Collins, 2007). For one thing, there was no basis for the claim that 38 peo-

ple witnessed the event. Further, most of the assault took place in an entry hall, out of view of neighbors. And, in fact, phone calls to the police *were* made during the attack. It was still a tragedy, of course, but not one that proved the people of New York to be the indifferent bystanders the original story made them out to be.

For psychology, the important result of this misreported incident was that it led to some important research on bystander intervention that focused on the *power of the situation*. Under what circumstances will people help—or not?

Contrived Emergencies Soon after learning of the Kitty Genovese murder and the analysis in the press, two young social psychologists, Bibb Latané and John Darley, began a series of studies on the **bystander intervention problem**. These studies all ingeniously created laboratory analogues of the difficulties faced by bystanders in real emergency situations. In one such experiment, a college student, placed alone in a room with an intercom, was led to believe that he was communicating with one or more students in adjacent rooms. During a discussion about personal problems, this individual heard what sounded like another student having a seizure and gasping for help. During the “seizure,” the bystander couldn’t talk to the other students or find out what, if anything, they were doing about the emergency. The dependent variable was the speed with which he reported the emergency to the experimenter. The independent variable was the number of people he believed were in the discussion group with him.

It turned out that the speed of response by those in this situation depended on the number of bystanders they thought were present. The more other people they believed to be listening in on the situation in other rooms, the slower they were to report the seizure, if they did so at all. As you can see in Figure 11.3, all those in a two-person situation intervened within 160 seconds, but only 60% of those who believed they were part of a large group ever informed the experimenter that another student was seriously ill (Latané & Darley, 1968).

Was it the person or the situation? Personality tests showed no significant relationship between particular personality characteristics of the participants and their speed or likelihood of intervening. The best predictor of bystander intervention was the situational variable of group size present. By way of explana-



Kitty Genovese, victim of brutality and bystander apathy.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 1

The *independent variable* refers to the stimulus conditions or experimenter varied conditions for different groups in an experiment, while the *dependent variable* is the measured outcome.

Bystander intervention problem

Laboratory and field study analogues of the difficulties faced by bystanders in real emergency situations.

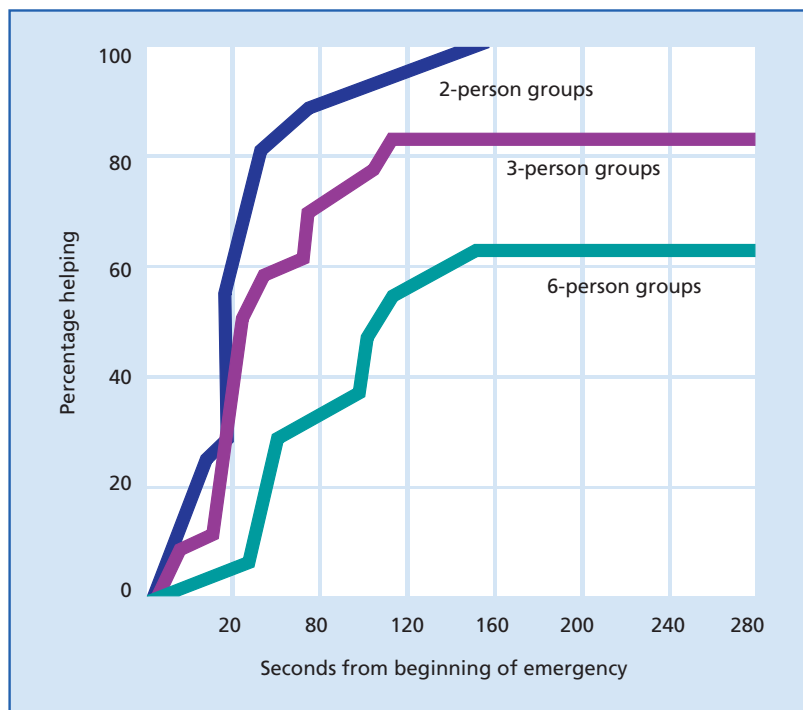


FIGURE 11.3
Bystander Intervention in an Emergency

The more people present in a crisis, the less likely it is that any one bystander will intervene. As this summary of research findings shows, bystanders act most quickly in two-person groupings. (Source: From “Bystander Intervention in Emergencies: Diffusion of Responsibilities,” by S. M. Darley and B. Latané, *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1968, Vol. 8, No. 4, pp. 377–384. Copyright © 1968 by the American Psychological Association.)

tion, Darley and Latané proposed that the likelihood of intervention decreases as the group increases in size because each person assumes that others will help, so he or she does not have to make that commitment. Individuals who perceive themselves as part of a large group of potential interveners experience a **diffusion of responsibility**: a dilution or weakening of each group member's obligation to help, to become personally involved. You may have experienced moments of diffused responsibility if you have driven past a disabled car beside a busy highway because you believed “surely someone else” would stop and help—as you went on your way.

Another factor was undoubtedly also at work: *conformity*. As you will remember from our Core Concept and from Asch's studies of conformity, when people don't know what to do, they take their cues from others. The same thing occurred in the bystander studies, where those who failed to intervene were observing and conforming to the behavior of other people who were doing nothing. They allowed the absence of helping by others to define the situation for them as one in which the norm was that it was OK to be passively indifferent.

Does Training Encourage Helping? Two studies suggest that the bystander problem can be countered with appropriate training. Ted Huston and his colleagues (1981) found no personality traits that distinguished people who had helped in actual emergency situations from those who had not. But they did find that helpers more often had had some medical, police, first-aid, or CPR training in dealing with emergency situations. And another study shows that even a psychology class lecture on the bystander problem can help (Beaman et al., 1978). Students had an opportunity to help a “victim” slumped in a doorway while walking by with a nonresponsive confederate of the experimenter. Those who had attended a lecture on bystander intervention were twice as likely to stop and attempt to help as those who had not received the lecture on helping. Education apparently can make a difference; we hope you will also use the lessons of this chapter in constructive ways.

Need Help? Ask for It!

To demonstrate the positive effects of situational power, social psychologist Tom Morariety (1975) arranged two fascinating experiments. In the first study, New Yorkers watched as a thief snatched a woman's suitcase in a restaurant when she left her table. In the second, they watched a thief grab a portable radio from a beach blanket when the owner left it for a few minutes. What did these onlookers do? Some did nothing, letting the thief go on his merry way. But others did intervene. What were the conditions under which some helped and others did not?

In each experiment, the would-be theft victim (the experimenter's accomplice) had first asked the soon-to-be observer of the crime either “Do you have the time?” or “Will you please keep an eye on my bag (radio) while I'm gone?” The first interaction elicited no personal responsibility, and almost all of the bystanders stood by idly as the theft unfolded. However, of those who had agreed to watch the victim's property, almost every bystander intervened. They called for help, and some even tackled the runaway thief on the beach.

The encouraging message is that we can often convert apathy to action and transform callousness to kindness just by asking for it. The mere act of requesting a favor forges a special human bond that involves other people in ways that materially change the situation. It makes them feel responsible to you and thereby responsible for what happens in your shared social world. You can use this knowledge to increase your chances of getting aid from would-be helpers in several ways (Schroeder et al., 1995):

- *Ask for help.* Let others know you need it rather than assuming they realize your need or know what is required.

Diffusion of responsibility Dilution or weakening of each group member's obligation to act when responsibility is perceived to be shared with all group members or accepted by the leader.

- *Reduce the ambiguity of the situation* by clearly explaining the problem and what should be done: “She’s fainted! Call an ambulance right away,” or “Someone broke into my house—call the police and give them this address!”
- *Identify specific individuals* so they do not diffuse responsibility with others present: “You, in the red shirt: Call 911!” or “Will the person in the blue Toyota please call for a tow truck right away?”

None of these tactics guarantees the safety of your person or possessions, of course. Nevertheless they probably represent your best hope if you find yourself, alone in a crowd, facing a real emergency.

DO IT YOURSELF!

What Makes a Samaritan Good or Bad?

Now that you know something about bystander intervention, let’s see how good you are at picking the crucial variable out of a bystander situation inspired by the biblical tale of the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:30–37). In the biblical account, several important people are too busy to help a stranger in distress. He is finally assisted by an outsider, a Samaritan, who takes the time to offer aid. Could the failure of the distressed individual’s countrymen to help be due to character flaws or personal dispositions? Or was it determined by the situation?

Social psychologists decided to put students at the Princeton Theological Seminary into a similar situation. It was made all the more ironic because they thought that they were being evaluated on the quality of the sermons they were about to deliver on the parable of the Good Samaritan. Let’s see what happened when these seminarians were given an opportunity to help someone in distress.

With sermon in hand, each was directed to a nearby building where the sermon was to be recorded. But as the student walked down an alley between the two buildings, he came on a man slumped in a doorway, in obvious need of help. The student now had the chance to practice what he was about to preach. What would you guess was the crucial variable that predicted how likely a seminarian—ready to preach about the Good Samaritan—was to help a person in distress? Choose one:

- How religious the seminarian was (as rated by his classmates).
- How “neurotic” the seminarian was (as rated on the “Big Five” personality traits).

- How much of a hurry the seminarian was in.
- How old the seminarian was.

All of the dispositional variables (personal characteristics) of the seminarians were controlled by random assignment of subjects to three different conditions. Thus, we know that personality was not the determining factor. Rather, it was a situational variable: time. Before the seminarians left the briefing room to have their sermons recorded in a nearby building, each was told how much time he had to get to the studio. Some were assigned to a late condition, in which they had to hurry to make the next session; others to an on-time condition, in which they would make the next session just on time; and a third

group to an early condition, in which they had a few spare minutes before they would be recorded.

What were the results? Of those who were in a hurry, only 10% helped. Ninety percent failed to act as Good Samaritans! If they were on time, 45% helped the stranger. The greatest bystander intervention came from 63% of those who were not in any time bind. (See Figure 11.4.)

Remarkably, the manipulation of time urgency made those in the “late” condition six times less likely to help than those in the “early” condition. While fulfilling their obligation to hurry, these individuals appeared to have a single-minded purpose that blinded them to other events around them. Again, it was the power of the situation.

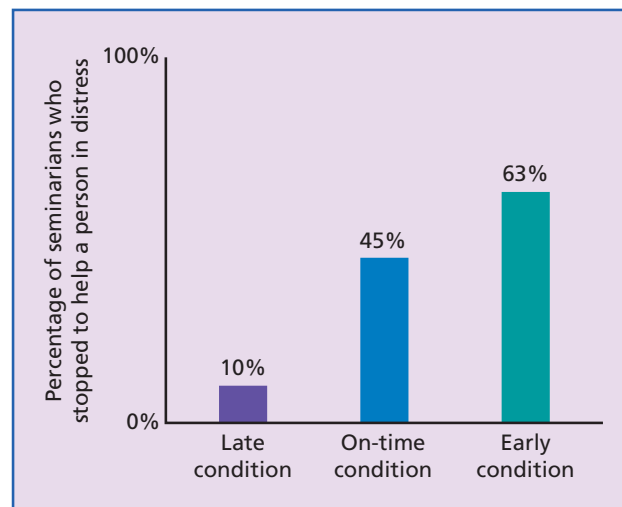


FIGURE 11.4
Results of the “Good Samaritan” Study

Even on their way to deliver the Good Samaritan Sermon, the vast majority of seminary students did not stop to help a distressed victim.

PSYCHOLOGYMATTERS

On Being “Shoe” at Yale U

When I (PGZ) arrived at Yale University to start my graduate career in the mid-1950s, I was dressed in all my South Bronx splendor—blue suede shoes, peg pants, long dangling key chain, big rolled collar, and other cool clothes. A month or two later, I was wearing chino pants, button-down shirt, and loafer-type shoes. I was not fully aware of the subtle social pressures to change my “taste” in apparel but knew that I felt more “in” in those weird Yalie clothes than I had in my good old Bronx duds. But as a budding psychologist, I used my personal case study to motivate me to find out more about that unwritten dress code, one that everyone around the campus at that time was following as if a Marine drill instructor was ordering our total mindless compliance.

My interviews with seniors revealed that indeed there was a powerful dress code that the **in-group** formulated regularly to distinguish them from the mass of **out-group** pretenders. Every single item of clothing could be identified by those in the know as socially appropriate at that time for real Yale men to wear (it was all male at that time). I was informed that the underlying concept was termed “shoe.” (Yale men of that era and earlier could be identified as wearing white buck shoes.) To be “shoe” was to be in, to be cool, to be with it, to be right on, and so forth. Not only was every bit of clothing indexed as to its degree of “shoeness,” but so was everything else in that universe. Tennis, golf, and crew were shoe; basketball was not. Asking questions in lecture classes was not shoe; tailgating before football games was shoe, but only if done with the right style, or panache. Of equal interest to me was the fact that shoe ratings changed periodically to keep outsiders from being mistaken as really true blue shoe. One year the Yale senior ring was shoe to wear, the next year it might be unshoe; or hand-made bow ties would become unshoe and clip-on bow ties would vault from low-shoe to high-shoe rating.

My team of informants helped me to form an index of the shoe strengths of every conceivable item of clothing that a Yale student might wear that year. With the help of my introductory psychology students, we went into the dormitories and found out what students from each college class actually had in their wardrobes. We then multiplied each of those items of clothing by their Shoe Index and averaged those ratings across each class from frosh to senior. Next, we separated out students’ shoe scores by whether they had come from prep schools versus public high schools.

Three major significant results were obvious from our graphs of the quantification of shoeness at Yale:

1. Student wardrobes become ever more shoe as they progress from lowly frosh up to high-powered seniors.
2. Preppy frosh were much more shoe than were their classmates from public high schools.
3. Over the four years, the gap between prep schoolers and high schoolers diminished, so that by senior year they were almost equally shoe.

When Yale became coed in the next decade, this kind of “shoeness” became less apparent, went underground, and now may exist only in very modified forms. But let this be a lesson to you whatever school you are in: Much of what you think is the You in Your Taste, is really the Them in social conformity pressures subtly imposed on you to be like Them and to liked by Them (Zimbardo, 2008).

In-group The group with which an individual identifies.

Out-group Those outside the group with which an individual identifies.

Check Your Understanding

1. **RECALL:** Which of the following would be a social role?
 - a. prisoner
 - b. student
 - c. professor
 - d. all of the above
2. **RECALL:** In the Asch studies, which of the following produced a *decrease* in conformity?
 - a. The task was seen as difficult or ambiguous.
 - b. The subject had to respond publicly, rather than privately.
 - c. The majority was not unanimous in its judgment.
 - d. The group was very large.
3. **RECALL:** In Milgram's original study, about what proportion of the teachers gave the maximum shock?
 - a. about two-thirds
 - b. about 50%
 - c. about 25%
 - d. nearly all
4. **RECALL:** Although conformity is a social phenomenon, brain regions that are activated when someone conforms are different from those brain regions activated by resisting and being independent.
 - True
 - False
5. **APPLICATION:** If you were a victim in an emergency, what lessons from social psychology would you apply to get the help you need?
 - a. Ask for it.
 - b. Make your request specific.
 - c. Engage particular individual observers.
 - d. Do all of the above.
6. **UNDERSTANDING THE CORE CONCEPT:** What consequences does attempting to understand human behavior in terms of situational causes have for the personal responsibility of the actors involved?
 - a. excuses them entirely
 - b. limits their guilt if they murdered someone
 - c. does not change personal responsibility and guilt, only severity of sentence
 - d. forces the situation to be put on trial as well

Answers 1. d 2. c 3. a 4. True 5. d 6. d

11.2 KEY QUESTION

CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL REALITY: WHAT INFLUENCES OUR JUDGMENTS OF OTHERS?

Powerful as a social situation is, it doesn't account for everything that people do. For example, it does not account for the individual differences we see in people's choices of friends and romantic partners, nor does it account for their prejudices. To explain the patterns we find in social interaction, we must also look at cognitive processes. In the language of social psychology, we need to understand how we construct our **social reality**—our subjective interpretations of other people and of our relationships. Thus, the social reality that we construct determines whom we find attractive, whom we find threatening, whom we seek out, and whom we avoid. This, then, leads us to the second lesson of social psychology, captured in our next Core Concept:

The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but also on our interpretation of their actions within a social context.

core
concept

We will illustrate how these cognitive factors operate by analyzing how they affect our attitudes toward other people. Let's start out by asking a simple question: What makes people like each other? That is, what produces interpersonal attraction?

Interpersonal Attraction

It is no surprise that we are attracted to people who have something to offer us (Brehm et al., 2002; Simpson & Harris, 1994). We tend to like those who give us gifts, agree with us, act friendly toward us, share our interests, entertain us, and help us in times of need—unless, of course, we suspect that their behavior

Social reality An individual's subjective interpretation of other people and of one's relationships with them.

is self-serving or hypocritical. Although we don't necessarily mind giving something back in the form of a social exchange, we shrink from relationships that merely take from us and offer nothing in return. In the best of relationships, as in a friendship, partnership, marriage, or business relationship, both parties receive rewards. You might consider whether this is true in your own relationships as we look at the reward theory of attraction next.

Reward Theory: We (Usually) Prefer Rewarding Relationships Most good relationships can be seen as an exchange of benefits (Batson, 1987; Clark et al., 1989). The benefits could be some combination of money and material possessions. Or the exchange might involve something intangible like praise, status, information, sex, or emotional support.

Social psychologist Elliot Aronson (2004) summarizes this in a **reward theory of attraction**, which says that attraction is a form of social learning. By looking at the social costs and benefits, claims Aronson, we can usually understand why people are attracted to each other. In brief, reward theory says that we like best those who give us maximum rewards at minimum cost. After we look at the evidence, we think you will agree that this theory explains (almost) everything about interpersonal attraction. Social psychologists have found four especially powerful sources of reward that predict interpersonal attraction: proximity, similarity, self-disclosure, and physical attractiveness. Most of us choose our friends, associates, and lovers because they offer some combination of these factors at a relatively low social cost.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 3

Social learning involves expectations of rewards and punishments learned through social interactions and observation of others.

Proximity An old saying advises, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Another contradicts with “Out of sight, out of mind.” Which one is correct? Studies show that frequent sightings best predict our closest relationships and the people we see most often are the people who live and work nearest us (Simpson & Harris, 1994). In college dormitories, residents more often become close friends with the person who lives in the next room than they do with the person who lives two doors down (Priest & Sawyer, 1967). Residents of apartments make more friendships among people who live on the same floor than among those who live on other floors (Nahemow & Lawton, 1975). Those who live in neighborhoods more often become friends with the occupants of the house next door than with people living two houses away (Festinger et al., 1950). This **principle of proximity** (nearness) also accounts for the fact that many people end up married to the boy or girl next door (Ineichen, 1979). And it correctly predicts that people at work will make more friends among those with whom they have the most contact (Segal, 1974).

Although you don't have to like your neighbors, the proximity rule says that when two individuals are equally attractive, you are more likely to make friends with the nearest one: The rewards are equal, but the cost is less in time and inconvenience (Gilbertson et al., 1998). Apparently, another old saying, that familiarity breeds contempt, should be revised in light of social psychological research: In fact, familiarity more often breeds friendship. Increased contact, itself, often increases peoples' liking for each other (Bornstein, 1989).

Similarity Do birds of a feather flock together, or do opposites attract? Which of these proverbs has the best research evidence to support it? People usually find it more rewarding to strike up a friendship with someone who shares their attitudes, interests, values, and experiences than to bother with people who are disagreeable or merely different (Simpson & Harris, 1994). If two people have just discovered that they share tastes in music, politics, and attitudes toward education, they will probably hit it off because they have, in effect, exchanged compliments that reward each other for their tastes and attitudes (Byrne, 1969). The **similarity principle** also explains why teenagers are most likely to make friends among those who share their political and religious views, educational aspirations, and attitudes toward music, alcohol, and drugs (Kandel, 1978). Likewise, similarity accounts for

Reward theory of attraction A social learning view that predicts we like best those who give us maximum rewards at minimum cost.

Principle of proximity The notion that people at work will make more friends among those who are nearby—with whom they have the most contact. *Proximity* means “nearness.”

Similarity principle The notion that people are attracted to those who are most similar to themselves on significant dimensions.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 7

The Gestalt principal of *similarity* refers to grouping stimulus objects that shared common perceptual features.

the fact that most people find marriage partners of the same age, race, social status, attitudes, and values (Brehm, 1992; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992). In general, similarity, like proximity, makes the heart grow fonder.

Self-Disclosure Good friends and lovers share intimate details about themselves (Sternberg, 1998). This practice of **self-disclosure** not only allows people to know each other more deeply, but it sends signals of trust. It is as if I say, “Here is a piece of information that I want you to know about me, and I trust you not to hurt me with it.” Friends and lovers usually find such exchanges highly rewarding. When you observe people exchanging confidences and details about their lives, you can predict that they are becoming more and more attracted to each other. Given that sharing personal disclosures comes after a sense of trust has been created in a relationship, it both takes time to reach this level of intimacy and is an index of that trust which the disclosing person has in the other. Think about the people with whom you share secrets and those you never would. What underlies these acts of sharing or withholding secrets?

Physical Attractiveness Yet another old saying tells us that beauty is only skin deep. Nevertheless, people usually find it more rewarding to associate with people they consider physically attractive than with those they consider to be plain or homely (Putzer, 1985). Fair or not, good looks are a real social asset. Potential employers, for example, prefer good-looking job candidates to plainer applicants (Cash & Janda, 1984). Looks also affect people’s judgments of children. Attractive children are judged as happier and more competent than their peers (Eagly et al., 1991). Even babies judge people by their appearances. We know this because babies gaze longer at pictures of normal faces than at those of distorted faces (Langlois et al., 1987).

Most people are repelled by the idea that they might make judgments based only on looks. Indeed, when asked what they look for in a dating partner, college students rank physical attractiveness down the middle of the list. But what people say does not match what they do—at least as far as their first impressions go. Across many studies, involving a variety of characteristics, including intelligence, sincerity, masculinity, femininity, and independence, it was *physical attractiveness* that overwhelmed everything else as the best predictor of how well a person would be liked after a first meeting (Aronson, 2004).

Other research shows that the principle of attractiveness applies equally to same-sex and opposite-sex relationships (Maruyama & Miller, 1975). Gender differences do exist, however. While both males and females are strongly influenced by physical attractiveness, men seem to be more influenced by looks than are women (Feingold, 1990).

These findings may come as bad news for the majority of us, who consider ourselves rather average-looking at best. But we can take some comfort in a study that suggests that people actually consider a composite of “average” features to be the most attractive. Investigators fed images of many students’ faces into a computer program that manipulated the facial features to be more or less of an average combination of all features from the many different student portraits. Surprisingly, they found that people usually liked best the images having features closest to the average size and shape (Rhodes et al., 1999).

Now some bad news for you exceptionally attractive readers: While we usually associate positive qualities with attractive individuals (Calvert, 1988), extreme attractiveness can also be a liability. Although physically attractive people are seen as more poised, interesting, sociable, independent, exciting, sexual, intelligent, well adjusted, and successful, they are also perceived as more vain and materialistic (Hassebrauck, 1988). A “double standard” also comes into play. For example, the public favors good-looking male politicians but disparages their attractive female counterparts (Sigelman et al., 1986). It is also double trouble to be shy and handsome or beautiful because others mistake those with a reserved demeanor as being cold, indifferent, or feeling superior.

Self-disclosure The sharing of personal information and feelings to another person as part of the process of developing trust.

These effects of physical attractiveness hint that reward, as powerful as it is, does not account for everything. We will see this more clearly below, as we explore some important exceptions to the reward theory of attraction.

Exceptions to the Reward Theory of Attraction While the rules of proximity, similarity, self-disclosure, and physical attractiveness may explain a lot about interpersonal attraction, a casual look around reveals lots of relationships that don't seem especially rewarding. Why, for example, might a woman be attracted to a man who abuses her? Or, why would a person want to join an organization that requires a difficult or degrading initiation ritual? Such relationships pose most interesting puzzles (Aronson, 2004). Could some people actually feel more attraction when they find that another person has less to offer them? Let's try to uncover the principles of social cognition operating behind some interesting exceptions to a reward theory of attraction.

Expectations and the Influence of Self-Esteem We have seen that reward theory predicts our attraction to smart, good-looking, nearby, self-disclosing, like-minded, and powerful people. Yet, you have probably observed that most people end up with friends and mates whom you would judge to be of about their same level of attractiveness—the so-called **matching hypothesis** (Feingold, 1988; Harvey & Pauwels, 1999). How does this happen? Is our selection of associates the result of a sort of bargaining for the best we can get in the interpersonal marketplace?

Yes, says **expectancy-value theory**. People usually decide whether to pursue a relationship by weighing the value they see in another person (including such qualities as physical attractiveness, wit, interests, and intelligence) against their expectation of success in the relationship (Will the other person be attracted to me?). Most of us don't waste too much time on interpersonal causes we think are lost. Rather, we initiate relationships with the most attractive people we think will probably like us in return. In this sense, expectancy-value theory is not so much a competitor of reward theory as it is a refinement of it.

One noteworthy exception to this argument involves people who suffer from low self-esteem. Sadly, people with low opinions of themselves tend to establish relationships with people who share their views, often with people who devalue them. Such individuals generally feel a stronger commitment to a relationship when their partner thinks poorly of them than they do when the partner thinks well of them (Swann et al., 1992).

Those individuals who appear to be extremely competent can also be losers in the expectancy-value game. Why? Most of us keep such people at a distance probably because we fear that they will be quick to reject our approaches. But, if you happen to be one of these stunningly superior people, do not despair: Social psychologists have found hope! When highly competent individuals commit minor blunders—spilling a drink or dropping a sheaf of papers—other people actually like them better, probably because blunders bring them down to everyone else's level and “normalize” them (Aronson et al., 1966, 1970). Don't count on this, however, unless you are so awesomely competent as to be unapproachable. The latté-in-the-lap trick only makes most of us look like klutzes whom people like less.

Attraction and Dissonance *Semper fidelis*, says the Marine Corps motto: “Always faithful.” Considering the discomfiting experiences that people must go through to become Marines (grueling physical conditioning, loss of sleep, lack of privacy, being yelled at, suffering punishment for small infractions of rules), it may seem remarkable that recruits routinely develop so much loyalty to their organization. The same is true of more enduring loyalty to fraternities that practice hazing compared to college house plans that do not. Obviously, some powerfully attractive and interesting forces are at work.

Cognitive dissonance theory offers a compelling explanation for the mental adjustments that occur in people who voluntarily undergo unpleasant experi-

Matching hypothesis The prediction that most people will find friends and mates that are perceived to be of about their same level of attractiveness.

Expectancy-value theory A social psychology theory that states how people decide whether to pursue a relationship by weighing the potential value of the relationship against their expectation of success in establishing the relationship.

Cognitive dissonance A highly motivating state in which people have conflicting cognitions, especially when their voluntary actions conflict with their attitudes or values. Leon Festinger was its originator.

ences (Festinger, 1957). The theory says that when people voluntarily act in ways that produce discomfort or otherwise clash with their attitudes and values, they develop a highly motivating mental state called cognitive dissonance. Those who continue to smoke yet know the negative consequences of cigarette addiction experience dissonance, as do gamblers who continually lose but keep playing. The same holds true for people who find themselves acting in ways that cause them to experience physical discomfort. Thus, our Marine recruits may feel cognitive dissonance when they find that they have volunteered for an experience that is far more punishing than they had imagined from the recruiting ads. And what is the psychological result?

According to cognitive dissonance theory, people are motivated to avoid the uncomfortable state of dissonance. If they find themselves experiencing cognitive dissonance, they attempt to reduce it in ways that are predictable, even if not always entirely logical. The two main ways of reducing dissonance are to change either one's behavior or one's cognitions. So, in civilian life, if the boss is abusive, you might avoid dissonance by simply finding another job. But in the case of a Marine recruit, changing jobs is not an option: It is too late to turn back once basic training has started. A recruit experiencing cognitive dissonance therefore is motivated to adjust his or her thinking. Most likely the recruit will resolve the dissonance by rationalizing the experience ("It's tough, but it builds character!") and by developing a stronger loyalty to the organization ("Being a member of such an elite group is worth all the suffering!").

In general, cognitive dissonance theory says that when people's cognitions and actions are in conflict (a state of *dissonance*), they often reduce the conflict by changing their thinking to fit their behavior. Why? People don't like to see themselves as being foolish or inconsistent. So, to explain their own behavior to themselves, people are motivated to change their attitudes. Otherwise, it would threaten their self-esteem.

One qualification on this theory has recently come to light. In Japan, and, perhaps, in other parts of Asia, studies show that people have a lesser need to maintain high self-esteem than do North Americans (Bower, 1997a; Heine et al., 1999). As a result, cognitive dissonance was found to have less power to change attitudes among Japanese. Apparently, cognitive dissonance is yet another psychological process that operates differently in collectivist and individualistic cultures.

The Explanatory Power of Dissonance Despite cultural variations, cognitive dissonance theory explains many things that people do to justify their behavior and thereby avoid dissonance. For example, it explains why smokers so often rationalize their habit. It explains why people who have put their efforts into a project, whether it be volunteering for the Red Cross or writing a letter of recommendation, become more committed to the cause as time goes on—to justify their effort. It also explains why, if you have just decided to buy a Toyota Prius, you will attend to new information supporting your choice (such as Prius commercials on TV), but you will tend to ignore dissonance-producing information (such as its higher price or a Prius broken down alongside the freeway).

Cognitive dissonance theory also helps us understand certain puzzling social relationships, such as a woman who is attracted to a man who abuses her. Her dissonance might be summed up in this thought: "Why am I staying with someone who hurts me?" Her powerful drive for self-justification may make her reduce the dissonance by focusing on his good points and minimizing the abuse. And, if she has low self-esteem, she may also tell herself that she deserved his abuse. To put the matter in more general terms: Cognitive dissonance theory predicts that people are attracted to those for whom they have agreed to suffer. A general reward theory, by contrast, would never have predicted that outcome. Another vital contribution made by dissonance theorists is providing a theoretical framework for understanding why we all come to justify our foolish beliefs,

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 9

Social psychologists view cognitive dissonance as a powerful *psychological motive*.



Cognitive dissonance theory predicts that these recruits will increase their loyalty to the Marine Corps as a result of their basic training ordeal.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 6

Collectivist cultures socialize people to value the needs of the group before the desires of the individual.

bad decisions, and even hurtful acts against others—by justification and disowning personal responsibility for dissonance-generating decisions (Tavris & Aronson, 2007).

To sum up our discussion on interpersonal attraction: You will not usually go far wrong if you use a reward theory to understand why people are attracted to each other. People initiate social relationships because they expect some sort of benefit. It may be an outright reward, such as money or status or sex, or it may be an avoidance of some feared consequence, such as pain. But social psychology also shows that a simple reward theory cannot, by itself, account for all the subtlety of human social interaction. A more sophisticated and useful understanding of attraction must take into account such cognitive factors as expectations, self-esteem, and cognitive dissonance. That is, a complete theory must take into account the ways that we interpret our social environment. This notion of interpretation also underlies other judgments that we make about people, as we shall see next in our discussion of attributions.

Making Cognitive Attributions

We are always trying to explain to ourselves why people do what they do. Suppose you are riding on a bus when a middle-aged woman with an armload of packages gets on. In the process of finding a seat, she drops everything on the floor as the bus starts up. How do you explain her behavior? Do you think of her as the victim of circumstances, or is she incompetent, or eliciting sympathy so someone will give up a seat to her?

Social psychologists have found that we tend to attribute other people's actions and misfortunes to their personal traits, rather than to situational forces, such as the unpredictable lurching of the bus. This helps explain why we often hear attributions of laziness or low intelligence to the poor or homeless, rather than an externally imposed lack of opportunity (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). It also helps us understand why most commentators on the Kitty Genovese murder attributed the inaction of the bystanders to defects in character of those who did not help, rather than to social influences on them (emergency 911 was not in effect at that time, so it was not clear who to call in emergencies; it was difficult to view the crime scene from high story apartments, and so on).

On the other side of the attributional coin, we find that people use the same process to explain each other's successes. So, you may ascribe the success of a favorite singer, athlete, or family member to personal traits, such as exceptional talent or intense motivation. In doing so, we tend to ignore the effects of situational forces, such as the influence of family, coaches, a marketing blitz, long practice, sacrifices, or just a "lucky break."

The Fundamental Attribution Error Psychologists refer to the **fundamental attribution error (FAE)** as the dual tendency to overemphasize personal traits (the rush to the dispositional) while minimizing situational influences. Recall our use of the FAE to explain the low estimates of psychiatrists when predicting the typical shock level of most American citizens in the Milgram obedience experiment. The FAE is not always an "error," of course. If the causes really are dispositional, the observer's guess is correct. So the FAE is best thought of as a bias rather than a mistake. However, the FAE is an error in the sense that an observer may overlook legitimate, situational explanations for another's actions. For example, if the car in front of you brakes suddenly so that you almost collide, your first impression may be that the other driver is at fault, a dispositional judgment. But what if the driver slowed down to avoid hitting a dog that ran into the road? Then the explanation for the near-accident would be situational, not dispositional. By reminding ourselves that circumstances may account for seemingly inexplicable actions, we are less likely to commit the FAE. As a general principle, your authors encourage you to practice "attributional charity," which involves always trying first to find a situa-

Fundamental attribution error (FAE) The dual tendency to overemphasize internal, dispositional causes and minimize external, situational pressures. The FAE is more common in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures.

tional explanation for strange or unusual behavior of others before blaming them with dispositional explanations.

Despite its name, however, the fundamental attribution error is not as fundamental as psychologists at first thought. Cross-cultural research has suggested that it is more pervasive in individualistic cultures, as found in the United States or Canada, than in collectivist cultures, as found in Japan or China (Norenzayan & Nisbett, 2000). Even within the United States, urban children are more susceptible to the fundamental attribution error than are their country cousins (Lillard, 1999).

Biased Thinking about Yourself Oddly, you probably judge yourself by two different standards, depending on whether you experience success or failure. When things go well, most people attribute their own success to internal factors, such as motivation, talent, or skill (“I am good at taking multiple-choice tests”). But when things go poorly, they attribute failure to external factors beyond their control (“The professor asked trick questions”) (Smith & Ellsworth, 1987). Psychologists have dubbed this tendency the **self-serving bias** (Bradley, 1978; Fletcher & Ward, 1988). Self-serving biases are probably rooted in the need for self-esteem, a preference for interpretations that save face and cast our actions in the best possible light (Schlenker et al., 1990).

Social pressures to excel as an individual make the self-serving bias, like the fundamental attribution error, more common in individualist cultures than in collectivist cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In addition, when trying to understand the behavior of others we tend often to use dispositional explanations, finding things “in them” that might explain why they did this or that. However, when we are trying to figure out the reasons for our own actions, we tend to look to the situational factors acting on us, because we are more aware of them than in our judgments of others. If you believed that you would have defied the authority in the Milgram study and quit long before the 450-volt shock level, despite the evidence that the majority went all the way, a self-serving bias was at work to make you think of yourself as able to resist situational forces that overwhelmed others.

Universal Dimensions of Social Cognition: Warmth and Competence

Among the most basic social perceptions anyone makes are those of “others” as friend or foe, intending to do us good or ill, and able to enact those intentions or not. A large body of new research has established that perceived *warmth* and *competence* of others are the two universal dimensions of human social cognition, at both individual and group levels. People in all cultures differentiate each other by liking (warmth and trustworthiness) and by respecting (competence, efficiency). The warmth dimension is captured in traits that are related to perceived intent, including friendliness, helpfulness, sincerity, trustworthiness, and morality. By contrast, the competence dimension reflects those traits that are related to perceived ability, intelligence, skill, creativity, and efficacy (Fiske et al., 2007).

When these two dimensions are plotted on a graph, as in Figure 11.5, we see that four quadrants emerge: I. high warmth and low competence; II. high warmth and high competence; III. low warmth and low competence; and IV. low warmth and high competence. A large body of research reveals distinct emotions and behaviors associated with each of the social perceptions typical of the four quadrants (Fiske et al., 2007).

Those who are perceived to be high in warmth fall into quadrants I and II. But, as you will see, even though we are drawn to those in both groups because of their perceived warmth, we react to these them quite differently. For people that we view as fitting in quadrant I, we tend to feel pity and may actively seek to help them. (People frequently perceive the elderly and those with disabilities as falling in to quadrant I.) The added perception of competence, however, produces quadrant II, containing those we like or admire—and with whom we want



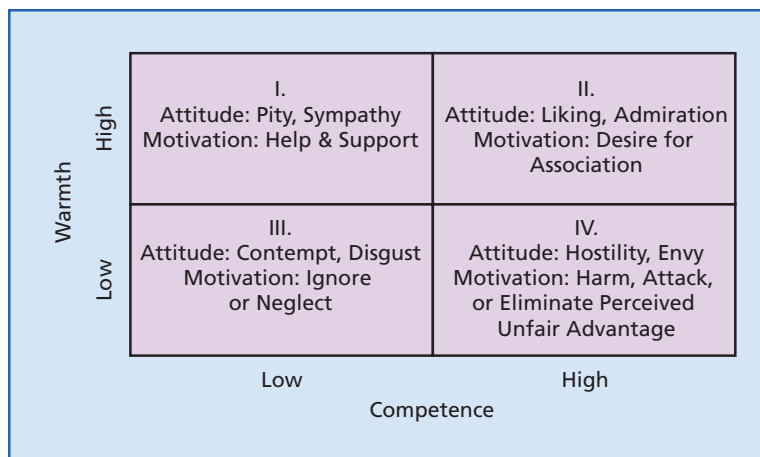
Can you think of at least three factors discussed so far in this chapter that might be motivating the helping behavior shown in this situation?

Self-serving bias An attributional pattern in which one takes credit for success but denies responsibility for failure. (Compare with *fundamental attribution error*.)

FIGURE 11.5
The Dimensions of Warmth and Competence

The dimensions of warmth and competence generate four quadrants of action and emotion toward others.

(Source: Based on data from Fiske, S. T., Cuddy, A. J. C., & Glick, P. [2007]. Universal dimensions of social cognition: warmth and competence. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 11, 77–83.)



to associate. (This quadrant includes those with whom we identify or aspire to associate—perhaps pastors or rabbis, movie stars, sports heroes, or Bill Gates.)

Now consider how we react to those we perceive as low in warmth. For those we pigeonhole in quadrant III—whom we perceive as being low in both warmth and competence—we feel disdain and a desire to avoid, ignore, or neglect them. (For many people these would include members of some minority groups or welfare recipients.) But our most negative feelings are reserved for those we place in quadrant IV: people whom we perceive as privileged but somehow undeserving. For us, the occupants of quadrant IV provoke feelings of envy and the wish to “bring them down a notch or two”—perhaps even the desire to cause them harm. (Common examples might include politicians, lawyers, and the very rich.)

The authors of this research argue that group-based prejudices and stereotypes appear high on one of these two dimensions and low on the other, thereby creating ambivalent affect and volatile behavior that has the potential to endanger constructive intergroup relationships.

Loving Relationships

Although people often do terrible things to one another, the complexity and beauty of the human mind also enable people to be caring and loving. Liking and loving are essential for happiness (Kim & Hatfield, 2004). Further, the pleasure of attraction and love appear to be part of the very circuitry and chemistry of our brains (Bartels & Zeki, 2004).

How do we know when attraction becomes love? To a large extent, our culture tells us how. Each culture has certain common themes defining love—such as sexual arousal, attachment, concern for the other’s welfare, and a willingness to make a commitment. But the idea of “love” can vary greatly from culture to culture (Sternberg, 1998).

There are also many kinds of love. The love that a parent has for a child differs from the love that longtime friends have for each other. Both differ from the commitment found, say, in a loving couple who have been married for 40 years. Yet, for many Americans, the term *love* brings to mind yet another form of attraction based on infatuation and sexual desire: **romantic love**, a temporary and highly emotional condition that generally fades after a few months (Hatfield et al., 1995; Hatfield & Rapson, 1998). But the American assumption that romantic love is the basis for a long-term intimate commitment is not universal. In many other cultures marriage is seen as an economic bond or, perhaps, as a political relationship linking families.

Psychologist Robert Sternberg (1998) has proposed an interesting view in his **triangular theory of love**. He says that love can have three components: passion (erotic attraction), intimacy (sharing feelings and confidences), and commitment

Romantic love A temporary and highly emotional condition based on infatuation and sexual desire.

Triangular theory of love A theory that describes various kinds of love in terms of three components: passion (erotic attraction), intimacy (sharing feelings and confidences), and commitment (dedication to putting this relationship first in one’s life). Developed by Robert Sternberg.

(dedication to putting this relationship first in one's life). Various forms of love can be understood in terms of different combinations of these three components. Thus, Sternberg suggests that:

- Romantic love is high on passion and intimacy but low on commitment.
- Liking and friendship are characterized by intimacy but not by passion and commitment.
- Infatuation has a high level of passion, but it has not developed into intimacy or a committed relationship.
- Complete love (consummate love) involves all three: passion, intimacy, and commitment. Companionate love often follows the consummate kind with a dimming of the passion but often with greater intimacy and commitment.

The need to understand what strengthens and weakens loving relationships in our own culture has acquired some urgency because of the “divorce epidemic” in the United States (Brehm, 1992; Harvey & Pauwels, 1999). If current rates hold, approximately half of all today's first marriages—and up to 60% of second marriages—will end in divorce. Much research stimulated by concern about high divorce rates has focused on the effects of divorce on children (Ahrons, 1994). The negative effects are lessened when the divorce is amicable and former spouses coparent and do not denigrate each other to the children. Sometimes removing children from a conflict-ridden family setting, or one with an abusive parent, is clearly better for them.

In the past decade or so, however, research emphasis has shifted to the processes by which couples maintain loving relationships and the environments that challenge relationships (Berscheid, 1999). We now know, for example, that for a relationship to stay healthy and to thrive both partners must see it as rewarding and equitable. As we saw in our discussion of reward theory, both must, over the long run, feel that they are getting something out of the relationship, not just giving. What they get—the rewards of the relationship—can involve many things, including adventure, status, laughter, mental stimulation, and material goods, as well as nurturance, love, and social support.

In addition, for a relationship to thrive, communication between partners must be open, ongoing, and mutually validating (Monaghan, 1999). Research shows that couples in lasting relationships have five times more positive interactions than negative ones—including exchanges of smiles, loving touches, laughter, and compliments (Gottman, 1994). Yet, because every relationship experiences an occasional communication breakdown, the partners must know how to deal with conflicts effectively. Conflicts must be faced early and resolved fairly and effectively. Ultimately, each partner must take responsibility for his or her own identity, self-esteem, and commitment to the relationship—rather than expect the partner to engage in mind reading or self-sacrifice.

This has been the briefest sampling from the growing social psychology of relationships. Such research has practical applications. Teachers familiar with research findings can now inform their students about the basic principles of healthy relationships. Therapists apply these principles in advising clients on how to communicate with partners, negotiate the terms of their relationships, and resolve inevitable conflicts. More immediately, as you yourself learn about the factors that influence how you perceive and relate to others, you should gain a greater sense of self-control and well-being in your own intimate connections with others (Harvey, 1996; Harvey et al., 1990).

Cross-Cultural Research on the Need for Positive Self-Regard

Before moving on to the final section in our exploration of social psychology, it is important to consider a rather profound question about the self in rela-



Is it love? Social psychologists have been exploring the psychology of the human heart, collecting and interpreting data about how people fall in love and strengthen their bonds of intimacy. Most recently the emphasis has shifted to the factors that keep relationships together.

relationship to others. Is it true that all people seek positive self-regard—that is, are all people motivated to possess, enhance, and maintain a positive self-concept? Is this a basic attribute of humankind? It would seem so if we consider what people around us do to enhance their self-esteem, the efforts made to be special, even through self-serving biases and personal affirmations. If we look around in North America, the answer might be different than if we look around in Japan.

Researchers have carefully examined both cultural contexts to identify how specific social environmental arrangements of their practices and institutions can promote and sustain the mentalities associated with self-regard. They have found that many aspects of life in North America lead both to an excessive focus on the self as an individual entity as well as encouraging motivation to regard one's self in positive ways, as special, unique, and entitled. This can be seen in ads, movies, songs, diaries, and many aspects of contemporary American culture. By contrast, what is more typical in Japanese culture is the development of a self-critical focus. Personal evaluation usually begins with a critique of the individual's performance or even lifestyle. That critical orientation is both self-effacing and humbling, thereby minimizing any tendency toward arrogance. However, its goal is to seek ways to improve one's attitudes and behaviors in constructive fashion, which satisfies both the individual's needs as well as that of the family, team, business, and the larger community. Such research is important in qualifying what appear to be universal aspects of human nature, but are actually culturally specific (Heine et al., 1999)

Prejudice and Discrimination

While our attributions about others can be positive or negative, prejudice, as social psychologists use the term, is always a negative judgment some people hold about other people. *Prejudice* can make an employer discriminate against women (or men) for a management job. It can make a teacher expect poor work from a minority student. And, in some places in the world, it has led to genocide, the systematic extermination of a group of people because of their racial or ethnic origins. We will define **prejudice** as negative attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward an individual based solely on his or her membership in a particular group or category. That category may be real, like gender or ethnicity, but it can also be created in the mind of the prejudiced person, such as considering some people as “poor white trash,” or others as “left-wing liberals.” Prejudice may be expressed as negative emotions (such as dislike or fear), negative attributions or stereotypes that justify the attitude, and/or the behavioral attempt to avoid, control, dominate, or eliminate those in the target group. Prejudiced attitudes serve as extreme biasing filters that influence the way others are perceived and treated. Thus, prejudice exerts a powerful force for selectively processing, organizing, and remembering pertinent information about particular people. It is also pervasive; most people in most nations harbor prejudices of varying kinds, some conscious, and some nonconscious (as new research is uncovering, to be treated later in this section).

Let's distinguish prejudice from *discrimination*, a related concept. While prejudice is an attitude, discrimination is a behavior. **Discrimination** can be defined as a negative action taken against an individual because of his or her group membership. Racial profiling, for example, is often considered a discriminatory procedure because it singles out individual people based solely on racial features. It can result in more arrests of minority members because police are more likely to confront them than majority members for their “suspicious behavior.” But, while discrimination can arise from prejudice, we will see soon that this is not always the case. In this section we will review the causes of prejudice, the role of dehumanization as a basic process in prejudice, and combating prejudice, and we will end with new research on stereotype threat.

Prejudice A negative attitude toward an individual based solely on his or her membership in a particular group or category, often without any direct evidence.

Discrimination A negative action taken against an individual as a result of his or her group or categorical membership. It is the behavior that prejudice generates.

Causes of Prejudice Prejudices can emerge from many sources (Allport, 1954; Aronson, 2004). Some we acquire at an early age. Some are defensive reactions when we feel threatened. Some are the result of conformity to social customs. And some help us distinguish strangers (and possible foes) from friends (Whitley, 1999). An understanding of these sources of prejudice will provide us with the foundation necessary for thinking about possible “cures,” ways to combat these antisocial reactions. Here, we present five causes of prejudice that have been studied by social psychologists: *dissimilarity and social distance*, *economic competition*, *scapegoating*, *conformity to social norms*, and *media stereotyping*.



Dissimilarity and Social Distance If similarity breeds liking, then *dissimilarity* can breed disdain—and prejudice. So, if you wear baggy shorts, a baseball cap backwards, and a nose ring, it’s a good bet that some middle-aged people from a traditional background would feel uncomfortable around you. They are likely to perceive you as a part of a social group that flaunts values and encourages “radical” behaviors quite distinct from those of their own group. Even small perceived differences in appearance can easily become fertile ground for the growth of prejudice.



Schoolchildren in Nazi Germany (1930s and 1940s) read textbooks describing Jews as inferior to the “Aryan race.” Illustrations in those books also depicted Jewish children excluded from schools.

What psychological principles are at work? When you perceive someone to be unlike the people in your in-group, you mentally place that person at a greater **social distance** than members of your own group. You are then less likely to view that individual as a social equal (Turner & Oakes, 1989). This inequality easily translates into inferiority, making it easier for you to treat members of an out-group with contempt. Historically, more powerful groups have discriminated against out-groups by withholding privileges, sending members of out-groups to different schools, making them sit in the back of the bus, forcing them into low-wage jobs, sending them to jail and into restrictive neighborhood ghettos, and otherwise violating their personal dignity.

Economic Competition A second cause of prejudice occurs in highly competitive situations, where one group wins economic benefits or jobs at the other group’s expense, which can easily fan the flames of prejudice. For example, in the Pacific Northwest, where competition over old-growth forests threatens jobs and wildlife habitat, prejudice sets timber workers and environmentalists against each other. Likewise, surveys have found, for example, prejudice against black Americans to be greatest among white groups poised at an economic level just above the black American average—precisely the ones who would feel their jobs most threatened by black Americans (Greeley & Sheatsley, 1971). It is often true that much prejudice exists not only down from those in privileged positions to those in minority positions but across minority groups, between recent immigrants from different countries, or when new immigrants threaten the financial security of established minorities.

This was the case in New York City’s South Bronx area when, after World War II, thousands of migrants from Puerto Rico emigrated to that neighborhood (after a massive sugar crop failure and given free government airfare to the United States). They competed with blacks living there and others coming back from war service for housing and low-level jobs. Researchers discovered high levels of antagonism and prejudice between these two minority groups, each struggling “to make it” in America and also coping with top-down prejudice against both of them by the majority white population (Zimbardo, 1953).

Scapegoating To understand a third cause of prejudice, consider how the Hebrew priests of olden times performed a ritual that symbolically transferred the sins of the people to a goat—the *scapegoat*. The animal was then driven into the desert to

Social distance The perceived difference or similarity between oneself and another person.

carry its burden of guilt away from the community. The term *scapegoat* has been applied in modern times to an innocent person or group who receives blame when others feel threatened. On a large and horrifying scale, German Jews served as scapegoats for the Nazis in World War II. Hitler's propaganda program encouraged this by creating visual images of German Jews as totally different from the rest of the German population; such terrible images set them apart as the "faces of the enemy" (Keen, 1991). **Scapegoating** works most readily when the object of scorn is readily identifiable by skin color or some distinctive physical features or when media propaganda can create such differences in the minds of the dominant group (Sax, 2002). It also becomes more probable when conditions worsen in a neighborhood or a country, and people are seeking to blame someone for that change from the good old days to bad times.

Conformity to Social Norms The source of discrimination and prejudice that is perhaps the most pervasive is an unthinking tendency to maintain conditions the way they are, even when those conditions involve unfair assumptions, prejudices, and customs. For example, in many offices it is the norm for secretaries to be female and executives to be male. Only 18% of private corporations have women on their boards in the United States. That low percentage drops to 2% in Italy and less than 1% in Japan in 2008. Because of this norm, it may be difficult for highly qualified women to break into the executive ranks, to breach the "glass ceiling" above them. We may find the same process where the norm says that nurses and lab technicians should be females and that engineers and mathematicians should be males. When we see that most people in a given profession are of a particular gender or race we assume that is the way of the world, the way the social order meant it to be, rather than to consider the social and economic conditions that have made it that way. So when women note that most computer workers are males, they are likely to avoid taking computer science courses or going into such careers, which then become for "men only." The opposite is now true in psychology. The majority of students taking psychology courses, majoring in it, and going on in psychology careers are now women, a major gender reversal in the past decade. As our field becomes identified as "women only," males are less likely to enter it, and salaries in all such fields decrease substantially.

So we see, then, that a social norm develops for various reasons and it becomes the accepted standard of what is perceived as appropriate and "right." When that happens, behavioral discrimination itself can cause or reinforce prejudiced attitudes. Imagine that you were the male executive who discriminated against a woman applying for an executive position. Or imagine that you were the white bus driver in the 1950s South who routinely sent black passengers to a special section in the back of the bus. In both cases, you were simply following the social norm of what others like you were all doing. However, you would have had to justify your own behavior to yourself. And if you have just treated people as second-class citizens because of their gender or ethnicity, it will be difficult, perhaps impossible, for you to think of them as anything other than inferior beings (without having a severe attack of cognitive dissonance). In this way, your discriminatory behavior can cause or strengthen prejudices. Because we are rationalizing creatures as much as rational ones, we endlessly justify our decisions and behavior to make them appear reasonable by generating "good reasons" for our bad behaviors.

Media Stereotypes Our fifth cause of prejudice occurs when stereotyped images used to depict groups of people in film, in print, and on television reinforce prejudicial social norms. Such images are far from harmless, because people have learned many of their prejudices from the stereotypes they saw on TV and in books, movies, and magazines (Greenberg, 1986). On the other hand, images in the media can also change those norms. Until the Black Power movement gained media attention, Africans and African Americans were most often portrayed in movies and on TV

Scapegoating Blaming an innocent person or a group for one's own troubles and then discriminating against or abusing them.

as simple, slow, comic characters, perpetuating the “Sambo” image that many whites held. Fortunately, the most blatant racial stereotypes have disappeared from the national media in the past few decades. Media distortions still occur, of course, but they are subtler. Prime time features three times as many male as female characters (Aronson, 2004). Most are shown in professional and managerial positions, even though two-thirds of the U.S. workforce is employed in blue-collar and service jobs. The proportion of nonwhites and older persons who appear on TV is also much smaller than in the general population. For viewers, the result is a biased picture of the world. This is where it becomes critical to have a variety of role models in the media that portray positions of influence and credibility to young people from those subgroups, such as woman and ethnic/racial minority members as TV news anchors.

Dehumanization The most powerful psychological process underlying prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup violence is *dehumanization*. It does so by causing some people to view others as less than human, even subhuman. **Dehumanization** can be defined as a psychological process that biases perception and cognitions of others in ways that deprive them of their humanity, rendering them as totally dissimilar and worthless. It is the mechanism behind thinking of particular disliked other people as objects, as the enemy, as animals and insects. Just as a retinal cataract blurs one’s visual field, dehumanization is like a “cortical cataract” that blinds the mind to any perceived similarity between Us and Them. Thinking about others as less than human means that one can suspend moral reasoning, empathy, compassion, and other processes that constrain hate and violence. It enables ordinary, even good, people to do bad, even evil deeds (Zimbardo, 2007).

A recent case in point of dehumanization in action occurred in 1994 in Rwanda, Africa. The Hutu government spread propaganda that the Tutsi people living there were the enemy of the Hutus; that they were insects, cockroaches, and had to be destroyed. Men armed with government-supplied machetes and women with clubs massacred 800,000 of their neighbors in 100 days (see Hatzfeld, 2005). A powerful documentary of this dehumanization leading to genocide can be seen at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/.

Can such a complex psychological process be studied experimentally? Yes, indeed, and with a remarkably simple manipulation used by researcher Albert Bandura and his students (Bandura et al., 1975).

A small group of students from one college were supposed to be helping another group of students from a different local college to improve their decision-making skills. They were to provide standard problems to be solved collectively and then reward good solutions and punish bad ones. Punishment was via increasing levels of electric shock administered to the entire working group (no shocks were actually given; they only believed they were). The experimental manipulation consisted of the research assistant telling the experimenter that the students from the other school were ready to begin as the working group. Those who would do the shocking were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Neutral, hearing only that the other students were ready; Dehumanizing, hearing that the other students seemed like “Animals,” and Humanizing, hearing that the other students seemed like “Nice Guys.” Simply hearing others labeled “Animals” by a stranger and believing they were also college students was sufficient to induce the students in that condition to administer significantly more shock than in the Neutral condition, and increasingly so over the ten trials. The good news: Humanizing others resulted in significantly less punishment than in the control condition, where students had no information about those others. So sticks and stones may break your bones, but bad names and dehumanization might kill you.

Combating Prejudice During the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, educators believed that prejudice could be overcome through a gradual process of

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Bandura pioneered the study of social models and observational learning.

Dehumanization The psychological process of thinking about certain other people or groups as less than human, as like feared or hated animals. A basic process in much prejudice and mass violence.



Golfer Tiger Woods is a role model in a sport that has traditionally had few representatives of minority groups.

information campaigns and education. But experience provided no encouragement for this hope. In fact, these informational approaches are among the least effective tools for combating prejudice. The reason? Selective exposure! Prejudiced people (like everyone else) usually avoid information that conflicts with their view of the world, so they never watched or listened to those messages. Even for those who want to change their prejudiced attitudes, erasing the strong emotions and motivational foundations associated with long-standing prejudices is difficult with merely cognitively based informational messages (Devine & Zuwerink, 1994). The process is even more difficult for those who cherish their prejudices because their sense of self-worth is boosted by perceiving others as less worthy than them.

So, how can one attack the prejudices of people who do not want to listen to another viewpoint? Research in social psychology suggests several possibilities. Among them are the use of new role models, equal status contact, and (surprisingly) new legislation.

New Role Models Golfer Tiger Woods, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and many others serve as new role models in prestigious jobs and leadership positions where few of their race or gender have appeared before. These role models encourage people in these groups who might never have considered such careers. What we do not know much about, however, is the ability of role models to change the minds of people who are already prejudiced. It is likely that they are perceived as “exceptions to the rule”; but, as the exceptions increase, maybe the rule bends or changes. Role models may serve better to prevent prejudice than to cure it.

Equal Status Contact Slave owners always had plenty of contact with their slaves, but they always managed to hang onto their prejudices. Obviously, mere contact with people from an out-group is not enough to erase in-group prejudices against them. Evidence, however, from integrated public housing (where the economic threat of lowered property values is not an issue) suggests that when people are placed together under conditions of equal status, where neither wields power over the other, the chances of developing understanding increase (Deutsch & Collins, 1951; Wilner et al., 1955). In an extensive review of all available literature, Tom Pettigrew (1998) found strong support for the power of equal status contact to prevent and reduce prejudice among many different kinds of groups.

Legislation You can’t legislate morality. Right? Wrong! The evidence of several studies suggests that the old cliché may be wrong. One of the most convincing of these studies was an experiment, done in the late 1940s, comparing the attitudes of white tenants toward black tenants in public housing projects. In one project, white and black occupants were assigned to different buildings, that is, the project was racially segregated. A second project mixed or integrated the two racial groups by assigning housing in the same buildings. Only in the racially integrated project did prejudicial attitudes sharply decrease (Deutsch & Collins, 1951). This result strongly suggests that rules requiring equal status contact can diminish prejudice.

This notion is reinforced by a larger social “experiment” that was done under far less controlled conditions. During the past half century, the United States has adopted laws abolishing racial discrimination. The consequences were sometimes violent, but prejudice and discrimination have gradually diminished. Evidence for this shift comes from polls showing that, in the 1940s, fewer than 30% of white Americans favored desegregation. That percentage has steadily climbed to well above 90% today (Aronson, 2004).

Because these changes in public opinion were not part of a carefully controlled experiment, we cannot say that the data prove that legislation has caused peoples’ prejudices to diminish. Nevertheless, we can argue that the increased number of white Americans favoring desegregation is exactly what one might predict from cognitive dissonance theory: When the law requires people to act

in a less discriminatory fashion, people have to justify their new behavior by softening their prejudiced attitudes. From this vantage point, it appears that legislation—when enforced—can affect prejudiced attitudes, after all. We now see that with dramatic changes in attitudes toward smoking and smokers following legal bans on smoking in many public venues.

Stereotype Threat Who we think we are may determine how we perform on various tests of ability. That principle emerges from a large body of research in this new area of social psychology, started by researcher Claude Steele, his colleagues and students (Steele et al., 2002). **Stereotype threat** refers to the negative effect on performance that arises when an individual becomes aware that members of his or her group are expected to perform poorly in that domain. This research reveals that performance on both intellectual and athletic tasks is shaped by awareness of existing stereotypes about the groups to which one belongs. It happens even if the person does not believe the stereotype is true; what matters is that others do, and the performer becomes aware that such a negative stereotype threaten his or her self-identity (Haslam et al., 2008).

College women in a math course take a special math test and do as well as male students, except when they first check off the gender box: Female. When reminded of their gender, then their performance becomes significantly poorer, confirming the stereotype about woman and math. The same was found with high-achieving African American students from Stanford University who were taking a test of verbal ability. When told it was a test of intelligence they performed worse than when the same test was supposedly not diagnostic of any intellectual ability. The stereotype of blacks having lower IQ than whites subconsciously creates anxiety that their performance will risk confirming this stereotype. That anxiety interferes with optimal cognitive processing and their positive self-identity, and they end up doing more poorly.

This effect extends to sports performance as well. Expert golfers who are exposed to the stereotype that members of their sex are worse at putting than are those of the opposite sex, hit their putts further away from the hole than those not given this false stereotype threat. In other research white golfers told that their performance will be compared with that of black golfers perform worse if they are led to believe it is a test of “natural athletic ability,” which blacks are supposed to have more of, according to the stereotype. However, when told it is a test of “sport strategic intelligence,” then they do much better. This enhanced performance of a reverse stereotype that makes you believe you are superior to another group on any dimension is known as “stereotype lift.” If Asian women taking a math test are required to focus on the fact that they are either woman or Asian, they do worse when reminded of their female status but better than the control condition of no identity focus when they are reminded of their Asian status (and the implicit stereotype of Asian math superiority). Again, here is stereotype lift at work. Thus, we can make stereotypes work for us as well as against our performance (Shih et al., 1999).

● PSYCHOLOGYMATTERS

● The Sweet Smells of Attraction

● The perfume industry spends millions annually to discover scents that will make the wearer more alluring. Pleasant body scents are assumed to enhance human attractiveness, as animal pheromones are known to be vital in sexual attraction within many species. Research reveals that certain odors can regulate mood, cognition, and even mate selection (Herz & Schooler, 2002; Jacob et al., 2002). We know that information presented subliminally, not consciously detectable, can influence social judgments (Fazio, 2001). Can subliminal smells similarly guide our social preferences? A team of researchers recently set out to answer that provocative question.

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Stereotype threat has been shown to affect people's academic performance.

Stereotype threat The negative effect on performance that arises when an individual becomes aware that members of his or her group are expected to perform poorly in that domain.

Undergraduates of both sexes underwent a procedure to determine their individual thresholds for detecting a set of odors, first above threshold for odors that were pleasant, neutral, and unpleasant, then below their thresholds for awareness of any odor. Next, they sniffed a bottle that contained a pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant odorant in low concentrations below their individual awareness threshold. After each sniff, a face was briefly flashed on a screen, which had been premeasured to be “neutral-average.” Each student then rated the degree of likeability of each of a variety of these neutral faces over many trials, pairing subliminal scents with the faces.

The results clearly demonstrate that likeability was influenced by faces paired with odors that elicited different affective reactions. Students liked most the faces they viewed after smelling a pleasant odor and liked least those accompanied by an unpleasant odor—even though they were totally unaware of having smelled either scent. Heart rates of the students examining the faces were also altered by these same scents, increasing with the unpleasant ones significantly more than the pleasant or neutral odors. The researchers conclude that, “the time-honored belief that scents play an important role in human social interaction appears to withstand scientific scrutiny.” (Li et al., 2007, p. 1048). This research also highlights the importance of the olfactory system in influencing social judgments and makes us hope that the subtle scents we emit will make pleasant impressions on those we want to like us.

Check Your Understanding

1. **RECALL:** According to Aronson, we can explain almost everything about interpersonal attraction with a theory of
 - a. love.
 - b. rewards.
 - c. genetic predispositions.
 - d. gender.
2. **RECALL:** Which of the following does the research say is most important in predicting initial attraction?
 - a. physical attractiveness
 - b. money
 - c. personality
 - d. nurturing qualities
3. **RECALL:** In trying to understand why Bill was late for an appointment, Jane blamed his lack of conscientiousness and ignored the facts of rush hour traffic and a major storm that hit town. Jane is guilty of
 - a. the chameleon effect.
 - b. the expectancy-value violation.
 - c. scapegoating.
 - d. fundamental attribution error.
4. **APPLICATION:** According to cognitive dissonance theory, which of the following would be the best strategy for getting people to like you?
 - a. Give them presents.
 - b. Show interest in their interests.
 - c. Tell them that you like them.
 - d. Persuade them to perform a difficult or unpleasant task for you.
5. **RECALL:** Prejudice is a(n) _____, while discrimination is a(n) _____.
 - a. behavior/attitude
 - b. instinct/choice
 - c. attitude/behavior
 - d. stimulus/response
6. **RECALL:** The evidence suggests that one of the most effective techniques for eliminating racial prejudice has been
 - a. education.
 - b. threat and force.
 - c. legislation.
 - d. tax incentives.
7. **UNDERSTANDING THE CORE CONCEPT:** Reward theory, expectancy-value theory, cognitive dissonance theory, and attribution theory all tell us that we respond not just to situations but to
 - a. our cognitive interpretations.
 - b. our social instincts.
 - c. the intensity of the stimuli.
 - d. our biological needs and drives.

Answers 1. b 2. a 3. d 4. d 5. c 6. d 7. a

11.3 KEY QUESTION

HOW DO SYSTEMS CREATE SITUATIONS THAT INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR?

We spend most of our lives in various institutions—family, schools, hospitals, jobs, military, prison, elderly homes—and may end in a hospice. Each of these settings involve *systems* of management and control, explicit and implicit rules of conduct, and reward and punishment structures, and they come with a history, a culture, and a legal status. In many cases it is **system power** that creates, maintains, and gives meaning and justification to a situation. Although social psychologists have highlighted the power of situations on behavior, as you have seen in this chapter, they have tended not to acknowledge the greater power that systems have to make those situations work as they do, sometimes for the better, but sometimes for the worse. This then leads us to the third lesson of social psychology, captured in our final Core Concept:

Understanding how systems function increases both our understanding of why situations work as they do to influence human behavior and is also the most effective way to plan behavior change from the top down; systems change situations, which in turn change behavior.

We will illustrate how **system power** can create a remarkably powerful social situation that in turn affected the behavior of all within its behavioral context in research known as the **Stanford Prison Experiment**. Then we will briefly examine other systems that have also generated abusive behavior, such as that in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. We do not have the space to also illustrate how network systems are involved in most nonviolent movements that train citizens in passive resistance, such as Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King Jr. in the American South, and Nelson Mandela in opposing apartheid in South Africa. Similar system networks were critical to develop by Christians who helped Jews escape the Holocaust.

The Stanford Prison Experiment

On a summer Sunday in California, a siren shattered the serenity of college student Tommy Whitlow's morning. A city police car screeched to a halt in front of his home. Within minutes, Tommy was charged with a felony, informed of his constitutional rights, frisked, and handcuffed. After he was booked and fingerprinted at the city jail, Tommy was blindfolded and transported to the Stanford County Prison, where he was stripped and issued a smock-type uniform with an I.D. number on the front and back. Tommy became "Prisoner 8612." Eight other college students were also arrested and assigned numbers during that mass arrest by the local police.

The prison guards were anonymous in their khaki military uniforms, reflector sunglasses, and nameless identity as "Mr. Correctional Officer," but with symbols of power shown off in their big nightsticks, whistles, and handcuffs. To them, the powerless prisoners were nothing more than their worthless numbers.

The guards insisted that prisoners obey all of their many arbitrary rules without question or hesitation. Failure to do so led to losses of privileges. At first, privileges included opportunities to read, write, or talk to other inmates. Later, the slightest protest resulted in the loss of "privileges" of eating, sleeping, washing, or having visitors during visiting nights. Failure to obey rules also resulted in a variety of unpleasant tasks such as endless push-ups, jumping jacks, and number count-offs that lasted for hours on end. Each day saw an escalation of the level of hostile abuse by the guards against their prisoners: making them clean toilets with bare hands, doing push-ups while a guard stepped on the prisoner's back, spending long hours naked in solitary confinement, and finally engaging in degrading forms of sexual humiliation.

CONNECTION • CHAPTER 13

Marriage counselors and family therapists often use a *systems* approach to understanding and resolving family conflicts.

core concept

System power Influences on behavior that come from top-down sources in the form of creating and maintaining various situations that in turn have an impact on actions of individuals in those behavioral contexts.

Stanford Prison Experiment Classic study of institutional power in directing normal, healthy college student volunteers playing randomly assigned roles of prisoners and guards to behave contrary to their dispositional tendencies, as cruel guards or pathological prisoners.

“Prisoner 8612” encountered some guards whose behavior toward him and the other prisoners was sadistic, taking apparent pleasure in cruelty; others were just tough and demanding; a few were not abusive. However, none of the few “good” guards ever challenged the extremely demeaning actions of the “perpetrators of evil.”

Less than 36 hours after the mass arrest, “Prisoner 8612,” who had become the ringleader of an aborted prisoner rebellion that morning, had to be released because of an extreme stress reaction of screaming, crying, rage, and depression. On successive days, three more prisoners developed similar stress-related symptoms. A fifth prisoner developed a psychosomatic rash all over his body when the parole board rejected his appeal, and he too was released from the Stanford County Jail.

Everyone in the prison, guard and prisoner alike, had been selected from a large pool of student volunteers. On the basis of extensive psychological tests and interviews, the volunteers had been judged as law-abiding, emotionally stable, physically healthy, and “normal-average” on all personality trait measures. In this mock prison experiment, assignment of participants to the independent variable treatment of “guard” or “prisoner” roles had been determined by random assignment. Thus, in the beginning, there were no systematic differences between the “ordinary” college males who were in the two different conditions. By the end of the study, there were no similarities between these two alien groups. The prisoners lived in the jail around the clock, and the guards worked standard eight-hour shifts.

As guards, students who had been pacifists and “nice guys” in their usual life settings behaved aggressively—sometimes even sadistically. As prisoners, psychologically stable students soon behaved pathologically, passively resigning themselves to their unexpected fate of learned helplessness. The power of the simulated prison situation had created a new social reality—a functionally real prison—in the minds of both the jailers and their captives. The situation became so powerfully disturbing that the researchers were forced to terminate the two-week study after only six days.

Although Tommy Whitlow said he wouldn’t want to go through it again, he valued the personal experience because he learned so much about himself and about human nature. Fortunately, he and the other students were basically healthy, and extensive debriefing showed that they readily bounced back from the prison experience. Follow-ups over many years revealed no lasting negative effects on these students. The participants had all learned an important lesson: Never underestimate the power of a bad situation to overwhelm the personalities and good upbringing of even the best and brightest among us and of a system to create such situations (Zimbardo, 2007).

The basic results of this study were replicated in cross-cultural research in Australia (Lovibond et al., 1979). However, there was never the same degree of violence exhibited by the guards, perhaps because this study followed the cultural norm of everyone having afternoon teatime. For detailed information about this study see www.prisonexp.org.

Suppose you had been a subject in the Stanford prison experiment. Would you have been a good guard—or a sadist? A model compliant prisoner—or a rebel? Could you have resisted the pressures and stresses of these circumstances? It is a similar question raised about how you think you might have behaved if you were the “Teacher” in the Milgram obedience research—obey or defy? We’d all like to believe we would be good guards and heroic prisoners; we would never step across that line between good and evil. And, of course, we all believe that we would be able to keep things in perspective, knowing that it was “just an experiment,” only role-playing and not real. But the best bet is that most of us would react the same way as these participants did. This disturbing study raises many questions about how well we really know ourselves, our inner dispositional qualities, and how much we appreciate the subtle powers of external



Scenes from the Stanford prison experiment.

forces on us, the situational qualities. Obviously, it also raises ethical issues about whether such research should have ever been done or allowed to continue.

By the conclusion of the Stanford Prison Experiment, guards' and prisoners' behavior differed from each other in virtually every observable way. (See Figure 11.6.) Yet it was only chance, in the form of random assignment, that had decided their roles—roles that had created status and power differences that were validated in the prison situation and supported by the system of prison authorities. No one taught the participants to play their roles. Without ever visiting real prisons, all the participants learned something about the interaction between the powerful and the powerless. A guard type is someone who limits the freedom of prisoner types to manage their behavior and make them behave more predictably. This task is aided by the use of coercive rules, which include explicit punishment for violations. Prisoners can only react to the social structure of a prisonlike setting created by those with power. Rebellion and compliance are the only options of the prisoners; the first choice results in punishment, while the second results in a loss of autonomy and dignity.

The student participants had already experienced such power differences in many of their previous social interactions in various systems of control: parent–child, teacher–student, doctor–patient, boss–worker, male–female. They merely refined and intensified their prior patterns of behavior for this particular setting. Each student could have played either role. Many students in the guard role reported being surprised at how easily they enjoyed controlling other people. Just putting on the uniform was enough to transform them from passive college students into aggressive prison guards.

Milgram's obedience research and the Stanford Prison Experiment form book-ends of much research illustrating the power of situations over behavior. However, the obedience studies were about individual authority power, while the prison experiment is about the power of an institution, a system of domination. The guards maintained the situation of abuse, but so did the research team of psychologists; the police contributed to its reality, as did many others who visited the prison setting—a prison chaplain, a public defender, parents and friends on visiting nights, and civilians on the parole board.

Chains of System Command

Psychologists seek to understand behavior in order to promote prosocial forms and alter for the better antisocial aspects of behavior. Understanding why some people engage in “bad behaviors” does not excuse them; rather it leads to new ideas about changing the causal influences on those behaviors. A full understanding of most complex human behavior should include an appreciation of the ways in which situational conditions are created and shaped by higher-order factors—*systems of power*. Systems, not just dispositions and situations, must be taken into account in order to understand complex behavior patterns.

Aberrant, illegal, or immoral behavior by individuals in service professions, such as policemen, corrections officers, or soldiers, or even in business settings, is typically labeled the misdeeds of “a few bad apples.” The implication is they are a rare exception and must be set on one side of the impermeable line between evil and good, with the majority of good apples set on the other side. But who is making that distinction? Usually it is the guardians of the system—who want

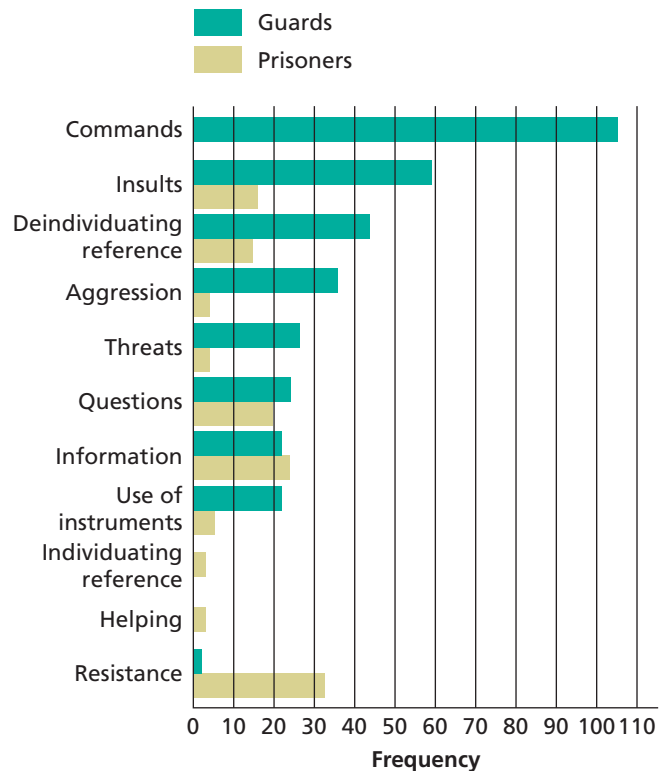
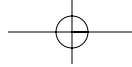


FIGURE 11.6
Guard and Prisoner Behavior

(Source: From R. J. Gerrig and P. G. Zimbardo, *Psychology and Life*, 18th ed. Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright © 2008 by Pearson Education. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.)



to isolate the problem to deflect attention and blame away from those at the top who may be responsible for creating impossible working conditions or for a lack of their oversight or supervision. Again the bad apple-dispositional view ignores the bad apple barrel-situational view and its potentially corrupting situational impact on those within it. A systems analysis focuses on the next step higher, on the “bad barrel makers,” on those with the power to design the barrel. It is the “power elite,” the barrel makers, often working behind the scene, who arrange many of the conditions of life for the rest of us who must spend time in the variety of institutional settings they have constructed.

What Happened at Abu Ghraib Prison? The world became aware of the abuses of Iraqi prisoners by American Military Police guards in **Abu Ghraib Prison** with the April 2004 televised exposure of horrific images that they had taken (see one such image on this page).

Immediately, the military chain of command dismissed it all as the work of a few rogue soldiers, while the president’s chain of command likewise blamed it on a few bad apples. Both systems were quick to assert that it was not systemic, not occurring in other military prisons. However, investigative reporter Seymour Hersh (2004a) exposed the lie in that attribution with his analysis of the culpability of both of those systems of power, those chains of “irresponsible” command. The title of his May 5, 2004, article in *The New Yorker*, was “Torture at Abu Ghraib. American soldiers brutalize Iraqis: How far up does the responsibility go?” His answer: all the way to the top of the military and civilian system of command (see also Hersh, 2004b).

A review of the dozen reports investigating these abuses, most by generals and government officials, clearly highlights the distorting influences on those American Army Reserve soldiers from their impossible working conditions in that dungeon coupled with total failures of military leadership and surveillance. Of the many factors responsible for those abuses, these reports point to many situational and system failures in addition to the personal moral failures of the soldiers (see Zimbardo, 2007). In fact, similar abuses in military prisons and other war zones had occurred before, during, and after this revelation of unthinkable behavior by American men and women soldiers at Abu Ghraib. So there were dispositional, situational, and systemic processes all interacting in this instance.

The Systems Lesson The most important lesson to be learned from the Core Concept for this section is that *situations are created by systems*. Systems provide the institutional support, authority, and resources that allow situations to operate as they do. System power involves authorization or institutionalized permission to behave in prescribed ways or to forbid and punish actions that are disapproved. It provides the “higher authority” that gives validation to playing new roles, following new rules, and taking actions that would ordinarily be constrained by preexistent laws, norms, morals, and ethics. Such validation usually comes cloaked in the mantle of ideology. Ideology is a slogan or proposition that usually legitimizes whatever means are necessary to attain an ultimate goal. The programs, policies, and standard operating procedures that are developed to support an ideology become an essential component of the system. The system’s procedures are considered reasonable and appropriate as the ideology comes to be accepted as sacred.

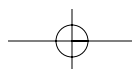
However, although all systems involve individuals at varying levels of power and status, most systems are not transparent, concealing much of their operation from outsiders. So even when a system is failing to meet its objectives and goals, as many failing educational or correctional systems are, or in mega corporations that engage in corrupt practices, higher-ups are hidden from public scrutiny.

Nevertheless, to change undesirable behavior and promote more socially desirable behavior, it is not sufficient to continue to rely on the individualistic medical model of treating people for problem behavior, when the situation might



One of the photos taken by American Military Police at Abu Ghraib.

Abu Ghraib Prison Prison in Iraq made famous by revelation of photos taken by Army Reserve MP guards in the acts of humiliating and torturing prisoners.



be a fault. And plans to improve situations must involve understanding and modifying the systems that create and maintain them. Instead, the call is for using a public health model that recognizes individual affliction and illness as the consequence of a vector of disease in society. Prevention rather than just treatment becomes the goal; inoculating against a virus prevents the spread of an epidemic. This should be as true for the evils of prejudice, violence, and bullying in our society as it is for viral infections.

Using Psychology to Understand the Abuses at Abu Ghraib Over a three-month period, Military Police, Army Reservists, working the night shift at Tier 1-A in that dungeon, used some of the 1000 prisoners detained there as their “playthings”—piling them naked in pyramids, hanging them upside down with women’s panties over their heads, dragging them around the ground on dog leashes, and sexually degrading them in various ways. Tier 1-A was the interrogation center run by Military Intelligence, the CIA, and civilian interrogator companies. When the unexpected insurgency against the U.S. forces suddenly escalated, the chain of command needed “actionable intelligence” from these detainees. So the MPs were given permission by higher-ups “to soften up” the prisoners, to prepare them for interrogation, to “take the gloves off.” Given that official permission for abuse, and with no senior officer ever providing oversight or surveillance of that night shift, all hell broke loose. However, the soldiers did not think what they were doing was wrong; one said it was only “fun and games.” They also documented these games with candid photographs of themselves with their abused prisoners in hundreds of horrific images.

One investigating committee was headed by James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, and included generals and other high-ranking officials. The report notes the relevance of social psychological research and theory to the understanding of these abuses:

The potential for abusive treatment of detainees during the Global War on Terrorism was entirely predictable based on a fundamental understanding of the principles of social psychology coupled with an awareness of numerous known environmental risk factors. . . . Findings from the field of social psychology suggest that the conditions of war and the dynamics of detainee operations carry inherent risks for human mistreatment, and therefore must be approached with great caution and careful planning and training.

Such conditions neither excuse nor absolve the individuals who engaged in deliberate immoral or illegal behaviors [even though] certain conditions heightened the possibility of abusive treatment.

The *Schlesinger Report* boldly proclaims that the “landmark Stanford study provides a cautionary tale for all military detention operations.” In contrasting the relatively benign environment of the Stanford Prison Experiment, the report makes evident that “in military detention operations, soldiers work under stressful combat conditions that are far from benign.” The implication is that those combat conditions might be expected to generate even more extreme abuses of power by military police than were observed in our mock prison experiment. The *Schlesinger Report* concludes with a statement that underscores much of what we have presented in this chapter: “Psychologists have attempted to understand how and why individuals and groups who usually act humanely can sometimes act otherwise in certain circumstances.” Among the concepts this reports outlines to help explain why abusive behaviors occur among ordinarily humane individuals are deindividuation, dehumanization, enemy image, groupthink, moral disengagement, social facilitation, and other environmental factors.

There are fewer more direct statements that your authors are aware of that highlight the value of psychological theories and social psychological research than this official government report. The full report, and especially Appendix G,

Schlesinger Report Report issued by one of the official investigations of the Abu Ghraib Prison abuses, headed by James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense. It highlighted the social psychological factors that contributed to creating an abusive environment.

which is notable for students of psychology, can be found at www.prisonexp.org/pdf/SchlesingerReport.pdf.

Preventing Bullying by Systemic Changes

Bullying in school and in the workplace is about some students and workers making life miserable for others by extreme teasing, threatening, physically abusing, and damaging personal reputations through lies and gossip. Most other students and coworkers who are neither bully nor victim are aware of the problem but usually ignore it or passively accept it. The traditional method for dealing with bullies is to identify the culprits and punish them in various ways, moving them to other classes or schools, or jobs. This is likely to move the abusers and their abuse to different venues but not change them; often it makes them even angrier and vengeful. **Bullying** is defined as systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt and/or psychological distress on one or more others, students in school and workers in the workplace.

Statistics on the prevalence of bullying vary from a conservative estimate of 15% of all Swedish school children being bullied or bullies themselves (Olweus, 1993) to 73% of a British sample who reported being bullied, being the bully perpetrator, or having witnessed bullying directly (McLeod, 2008). This large-scale study included nearly 2000 students, aged 12 through 19, across 14 schools. Girls are more likely to be the target of bullying than boys, and they are more emotionally affected by it. While male bullies use direct physical abuse, females tend toward indirect verbal abuse, exclusion, group rejection, and rumors.

Prevention of bullying requires switching from the usual punishment model of bullies to a systemwide set of practices that give zero tolerance for bullying. The impetus for change must come top-down from school superintendents and principals, involving teachers and parents, and then enabling students themselves as agents of change. Researcher Dan Olweus (1993) has used such a system change model in Sweden and other Scandinavian countries with considerable success. In the United States, students are bullied who seem “different,” the more shy, those with physical handicaps or alternative sexual orientations. “Actual or perceived sexual orientation is one of the most common reasons that students are harassed by their peers, second only to physical appearance,” according to psychologist Peter Goldbaum (cited in Novotney, 2008). At the core of new programs to combat and prevent bullying is developing curricula and practices from elementary school throughout all grades that promote respect for the dignity of individuals and for acceptance and tolerance of human diversity.

● PSYCHOLOGYMATTERS

● Using Psychology to Learn Psychology

● You may associate persuasion with advertising and politics, but persuasion does not stop there. It is woven into all human interaction—including the exchanges of ideas that occur in the classroom. There, your professors and fellow students will attempt to persuade you with reasoned arguments, and they will expect you to set out your points of view in the same fashion. But, aside from the open exchange of ideas and opinions, there are other, more subtle persuasive pressures of which you should be aware, says social psychologist Robert Cialdini (2001). ● If you don’t know about these, you run the risk of letting other people make up your mind for you. We will discuss three such subtle forms of influence that you will encounter in your college or university experience.

● **Social Validation** Although you may see a popular movie because your friends like it, going along with the crowd is a poor basis for judging the theories you encounter in your classes. Many of the world’s discarded ideas were once accepted

Bullying The act of tormenting others, in school classrooms or work settings, by one or more others, for personal, sadistic pleasure. It qualifies as a form of ordinary or everyday evil.

by nearly everyone. In psychology, these include the false notions that we use only 10% of our brain, that personality is determined by the first two years of life, and that IQ tests are a good measure of innate abilities. So, rather than accepting what you hear and read, questioning even the most widely held concepts is a good habit. In fact, most famous scientists have built their careers on challenging ideas that everyone else accepted.

Authority The lectures you hear and the textbooks you read are full of authority figures. Every parenthetical reference in this book, for example, cites an authority. Most are given, in part, to persuade you that the argument being offered is credible. The problem, of course, is that ideas are not true merely because some authority says so. For example, just a few years ago, every introductory psychology text in print taught that no new neurons were created in the brain after birth. Now we know that the textbooks and the experts they cited were wrong. Real proof of such assertions, however, requires more objective evidence obtained by the scientific method—not just the declaration of an authority.

The Poison Parasite Argument In advertising, a good way to undermine a competitor, says Cialdini, is with a message that calls into question the opponent's credibility. Then, to get people to remember what you have said, you can infect your opponent with a "parasite"—a mnemonic link that reminds people of your message every time they hear your opponent's pitch (Brookhart, 2001). A classic example involved antismoking ads that looked like Marlboro commercials, except that they featured a coughing, sickly "Marlboro Man." You may encounter the same sort of poison parasite argument in a lecture or a textbook that attempts to hold someone's ideas up to ridicule. That's not necessarily bad: In the academic world, weak ideas should perish. The sneaky, dishonest form of this technique, however, involves a misrepresentation or oversimplification of the opponent's arguments. The antidote is to be alert for ridicule and to check out the other side of the argument yourself.

The social psychology of persuasion, of course, involves much more than we have discussed here. A good place to look for more information is Cialdini's book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (2007). Perhaps the most important idea is that some knowledge of persuasion can forearm you against the persuasive techniques you will encounter, both in and out of the classroom. When you know how effective persuaders operate, you are less likely to donate money to causes you don't care about, buy a car you don't really like, or accept a theory without examining the evidence critically.

Check Your Understanding

- 1. RECALL:** The Stanford prison experiment illustrates the power of _____ to influence people's behavior.
 - a. personality
 - b. heredity
 - c. childhood experiences
 - d. the situation
- 2. RECALL:** What was the independent variable in the Stanford Prison Experiment?
 - a. random assignment to prisoner or guard roles
 - b. IQ level differences of those in the two roles
 - c. cultural backgrounds of the volunteers
 - d. all of the above
- 3. RECALL:** The abuses perpetrated by the MPs at Abu Ghraib Prison were blamed entirely on the soldiers as symptoms of their being "bad apples." Who is *least* likely to make such a negative dispositional attribution?
 - a. a social psychologist
 - b. a trial lawyer for the prosecution
 - c. military leaders
 - d. civilian chain of command leaders
- 4. UNDERSTANDING THE CORE CONCEPT:** If you wanted to stop bullying in your school, what would be most likely to be an effective strategy to follow?
 - a. Punish the bully publicly.
 - b. Teach the victim to fight back.
 - c. Reward the bully for not bullying any victims.
 - d. Change the entire school system to have zero tolerance for bullying.

Answers 1. d 2. a 3. a 4. d

Critical Thinking Applied: Is Terrorism “A Senseless Act of Violence, Perpetrated by Crazy Fanatics”?

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and suicide bombings in Israel, Iraq, London, Madrid, and elsewhere around the world raise questions for which there are no easy answers. *Terrorism* is really about psychology. It typically involves a relatively small group of people working as a network who take dramatic, violent actions against a larger group with the intention of spreading fear among them and inducing anxiety and uncertainty about their government’s ability to protect them. Terrorists do not want to conquer other nations’ land, as in traditional wars, but to conquer the minds of their enemies by making them feel victimized and fearful of random attacks.

What Are the Issues?

Global terrorism is an escalating threat that many nations must face in the coming years. Terrorists operate in networks that vary in their degree of organization, but they are not national states. A war against terrorism is an *asymmetrical war*, of nations against collectives of individuals, without uniforms or designated sovereign territories. Their tactics are hit and run, attacking at random times, amplifying the surprise value of their destructive power.

Some of the critical issues for you to consider include the following. How can a war against terrorism ever be “won”? What would winning actually look like if there were no one leader to surrender? Why is the best strategy for meeting this global challenge international cooperation and intelligence resource sharing rather than dominant nations acting unilaterally? What is the pipeline that is generating so many terrorists? In what sense can the threat of terrorism be reduced by “winning the hearts and minds” of young people who might be recruited by elders to join terrorist cells or be trained to become suicide bombers?

What Critical Thinking Questions Should We Ask?

The reasons for terrorist violence are many and complex. However, media sources of such claims try to simplify complexity and reduce ambiguity to simple frameworks. They often exaggerate fears for viewers and listeners. “If it bleeds, it leads,” is a classic statement about what it takes to be the lead TV news item (See Breckenridge & Zimbardo, 2006, about mass-mediated fear). When they or the general public do not under-

stand something, there is a readiness to label it “senseless.” That only means it does not make sense to them or that there is no solid evidence for the motivations behind it. For example, vandalism has been called senseless, until it becomes apparent that it is often done by have-nots who are trying to make an impact on society, a destructive, dramatic one when they are not able to make a more constructive one. As citizens and critical thinkers, we need to call for better information from our politicians, educators, journalists, and others who may try to assign easy answers to complex problems.

Is the Claim Reasonable or Extreme? Obviously this is an extreme generalization and simplification of a complex social-political-cultural issue. Unfortunately, the easiest and most simplistic response is to demonize those who perpetrate evil deeds—but that is merely name calling, and we should resist it. This tactic blinds us to the power of the situation to create aggression in ordinary people, as we have seen in the Milgram and Stanford Prison research. More important, it prevents us from dealing with the situations that nurture violence. Labeling others as “evil” or “pathological” usually prevents any attempt to understand the reasons for their actions, instead making them into objects of scorn or disdain. Again, it is a related mistake to think of violence and terrorism as “senseless.” On the contrary, destructive deeds always make sense from the perpetrator’s frame of reference. As Shakespeare’s Hamlet said, there is “method” in madness: We must understand the method in the minds of potential terrorists if we are to deter them.

What Is the Evidence? Research has shown that aggressive behavior can be induced by situations that create prejudice, conformity, frustration, threat, or wounded pride (Aronson, 2004; Baumeister et al., 1996). There is no evidence that terrorists, even suicide bombers, are pathological, rather that they are filled with anger and feelings of revenge against what they perceive as injustice. They are often well educated, in stable relationships, and now likely to be from both sexes. In many cases, they become part of systematic training program to learn the skills necessary to effectively destroy one’s perceived enemy and accept being a martyr for a cause they believe is just (Merari, 2006).

The flammable combination of poverty, powerlessness, and hopelessness are the tinder that the September 11 attacks were intended to ignite, says Jonathan

Lash, president of the World Resources Institute in Washington, D.C. (2001). Much of the world lives in poverty and hunger and sees no way out. Ethnic hatred and wars aggravate their plight. Moreover, the number of people living in these miserable conditions is increasing, as most of the world's population explosion is occurring in poorer countries. And, to make matters more volatile, says Lash, a large proportion of these desperate people depend directly on resources that are rapidly being depleted: fisheries, forests, soils, and water resources. As a result, every day thousands flee their traditional homelands and stream into the largest and poorest cities. Most are young—a result of the high birth rates in the Third World. Mr. Lash warns that urban slums, filled with restless, jobless young men, are “tinderboxes of anger and despair; easy recruiting grounds for bin Laden or those who may come after him” (p. 1789). We have seen this in recent violent riots in the slums outside Paris by young immigrants without jobs and educational opportunities.

Could Bias Contaminate This Conclusion? Indeed, several biases are at work here: first, the dispositional bias of focusing on individual perpetrators and ignoring their behavioral context, the situation and the system that gives shape and purpose to their actions; second, a simplification bias that reduces difficult complex issues into simple terms that give an illusion of simple, easy solutions.

Does the Reasoning Avoid Common Fallacies? The reasoning behind making and accepting this assertion about terrorism and terrorists includes giving into common fallacies as we have seen. Combating it involves understanding the immediate causal contributions leading to becoming a terrorist as well as the broader systemic influences on such extreme decisions.

Does the Issue Require Multiple Perspectives? Understanding terrorism requires the combined insights of many perspectives—and not just those from psychology. Issues of money, power, resources, and ancient grudges must be considered as well. But—like it or not—many people in the world perceive the United States as the enemy. Understanding this perception—and dealing constructively with it—demands that Americans see the conflict from someone else's point of view: those who consider the United States to be the enemy.

What Conclusions Can We Draw?

We must also realize that terrorism does not always involve international conflict. The student shootings at Columbine High, Virginia Tech University, and many other schools were terrorist acts, along with thousands of racial/ethnic hate crimes, attacks against

gays, and violence directed at abortion providers that have made news in recent years (Doyle, 2001). It would be a mistake to believe that terrorism is always an outside threat from foreigners: Even though some cultures are more violent than others, every culture can breed violent people who terrorize others (Moghaddam et al., 1993; Shiraev & Levy, 2001). Just remember that the bomber who blew up the Oklahoma City federal building and killed hundreds of innocent people was an American terrorist named Timothy McVeigh. The Ku Klux Klan was (is) a uniquely American terrorist organization acting in violent ways to instill fear and terror in blacks and others they considered their enemy.

The Need for a Cross-Cultural and Historical Perspective

A complete picture, however, necessitates taking perspectives that extend beyond psychology (Segall et al., 1999). When we expand our view of terrorism, we can see that long-standing hostilities arise from religious, ethnic, and racial prejudices and from poverty, powerlessness, and hopelessness. To arrive at this understanding, however, we must view terrorism from historical, economic, and political perspectives—again, not to excuse violent acts but to understand their origins. We cannot understand, for example, the tensions between Christianity and Islam without knowing about the 200-year-war that the Western world calls the Crusades (1095–1291) or the fall of the six-centuries-old Ottoman Empire (1300–1922) at the end of World War I. Although such events may seem remote, they changed the trajectory of history, and their religious significance continues to fuel conflict in the Middle East today.

A Positive Endnote

We can think of no better way to end a chapter that focused mostly on the way good people go bad than to leave you with a wonderful statement about the unity of humankind, and the need to respect our kinship with one another. It is from poet, preacher John Donne (*Meditations XV11*):

All mankind is of one author, and is one volume;
when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of
the book, but translated into a better language;
and every chapter must be so translated. . . . As
therefore the bell that rings to a sermon, calls not
upon the preacher only, but upon the congregation
to come: so this bell calls us all. . . . No man is an
island, entire of itself . . . any man's death dimin-
ishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and
therefore never send to know for whom the bell
tolls; it tolls for thee.

Chapter Summary

11.1 How Does the Social Situation Affect Our Behavior?

Core Concept 11.1: We usually adapt our behavior to the demands of the social situation, and in new or ambiguous situations we take our cues from the behavior of others in that setting.

Social psychologists study the behavior of individuals or groups in the context of particular situations. Much research in this area reveals how norms and social roles can be major sources of situational influence. The Asch studies demonstrated the powerful effect of the group to produce conformity, even when the group is clearly wrong. Another shocking demonstration of situational power came from Stanley Milgram's controversial experiments on obedience to authority. Situational influence can also lead to inaction: The bystander studies showed that individuals are inhibited by the number of bystanders, the ambiguity of the situation, and their resultant perception of their social role and responsibility. Groupthink occurs even in the highest level of government decision making, whereby smart people advocate actions that may be disastrous by mindlessly following the consensus of the group or its leader's opinion. Heroes are often ordinary people who

take extraordinary action to help others or oppose evil activities. We usually adapt our behavior to the demands of the social situation, and in ambiguous situations we take our cues from the behavior of others.

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| Asch effect (p. 485) | Heroes (p. 492) |
| Autokinetic effect (p. 486) | In-group (p. 498) |
| Bystander intervention problem (p. 495) | Out-group (p. 498) |
| Chameleon effect (p. 483) | Script (p. 483) |
| Cohesiveness (p. 487) | Situationism (p. 481) |
| Conformity (p. 485) | Social neuroscience (p. 487) |
| Diffusion of responsibility (p. 496) | Social context (p. 479) |
| Dispositionism (p. 481) | Social norms (p. 482) |
| Groupthink (p. 487) | Social psychology (p. 479) |
| | Social role (p. 481) |

MyPsychLab Resources 11.1:

Watch: Conformity and Influence in Groups

Watch: Social Influence: Robert Cialdini

Watch: Milgram Obedience Study Today

11.2 Constructing Social Reality: What Influences Our Judgments of Others?

Core Concept 11.2: The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but also on our interpretation of their actions within a social context.

The situation, by itself, does not determine behavior. Rather, it is our personal interpretation of the situation—our constructed social reality—that regulates behavior, including our social interactions. Usually we are attracted to relationships that we find rewarding, although there are exceptions, predicted by **expectancy-value theory** and **cognitive dissonance theory**. Attribution theory predicts that we will attribute other people's blunders to their traits or character (the **fundamental attribution error**) and our own to the situation (the **self-serving bias**), although this tendency depends on one's culture. Healthy loving relationships also demonstrate the social construction of reality, because there are many kinds of love and many cultural variations in the understanding and practice of love.

Prejudice and discrimination also demonstrate how we construct our own social reality through such cognitive processes as the perception of social distance and threats, the influence of media stereotypes, **scapegoating**, and **dehumanization**. We are all vulnerable to stereotype threat that can have a negative impact on our performance when we are made aware that we belong to a group that does poorly on certain tasks and tests.

The judgments we make about others depend not only on their behavior but also on our interpretation of their actions within a social context.

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|---|---|
| Cognitive dissonance theory (p. 502) | Prejudice (p. 508) |
| Dehumanization (p. 511) | Principle of proximity (p. 500) |
| Discrimination (p. 508) | Reward theory of attraction (p. 500) |
| Expectancy-value theory (p. 502) | Romantic love (p. 506) |
| Fundamental attribution error (FAE) (p. 504) | Scapegoating (p. 510) |
| Matching hypothesis (p. 502) | Self-disclosure (p. 501) |
| | Self-serving bias (p. 505) |

Similarity principle (p. 500)**Social distance** (p. 509)**Social reality** (p. 499)**Stereotype threat** (p. 513)**Triangular theory of love**

(p. 506)

MyPsychLab Resources 11.2:**Watch:** Cognitive Dissonance & Attitude Change**Watch:** The Need to Justify Our Actions**Explore:** Fundamental Attribution Error**Simulation:** Unconscious Stereotyping

11.3 How Do Systems Create Situations That Influence Behavior?

Core Concept 11.3: Understanding how systems function increases both our understanding of why situations work as they do to influence human behavior and is also the most effective way to plan behavior change from the top down; systems change situations, which in turn change behavior.

Many studies in social psychology—particularly those dealing with obedience and conformity—show that the power of the situation can pressure ordinary people to commit horrible acts, such as those of soldiers in Iraq’s **Abu Ghraib prison**. Understanding such complex behavior involves three levels of analysis: the individual’s dispositions, the situation’s forces, and the power of the system that creates and maintains specific situations.

The **Stanford Prison Experiment** put “good apples” in a “bad barrel” for nearly a week to test the dispositional versus situational explanations for the adverse outcomes. However, what has been ignored is the system that generates such bad barrels. Changing unac-

ceptable behavior, such as **bullying**, discrimination, or terrorism requires understanding how to modify systems of power and the situations they create and sustain, not just behavior modification of the individual actors.

Systems are complex structures embedded in a matrix of cultural, historical, economic, political and legal subsystems that must be identified and changed if they generate illegal, immoral, or unethical behavior.

Abu Ghraib Prison (p. 518)**Bullying** (p. 521)**Schlesinger Report** (p. 519)**Stanford Prison Experiment**

(p. 515)

System power (p. 515)**MyPsychLab Resources 11.3:****Watch:** Stanford Prison Experiment: Phil Zimbardo**Watch:** Becoming a Detective of Social Influence: Robert Cialdini**Watch:** The Power of the Situation: Phil Zimbardo

Discovering Psychology Viewing Guide



Watch the following videos by logging into MyPsychLab (www.mypsychlab.com). After you have watched the videos, complete the activities that follow.



PROGRAM 19: THE POWER OF THE SITUATION

PROGRAM REVIEW

1. What do social psychologists study?
 - a. how people are influenced by other people
 - b. how people act in different societies



PROGRAM 20: CONSTRUCTING SOCIAL REALITY

- c. why some people are more socially successful than others
- d. what happens to isolated individuals

2. What precipitated Kurt Lewin's interest in leadership roles?
 - a. the rise of social psychology
 - b. the trial of Adolf Eichmann
 - c. Hitler's ascent to power
 - d. the creation of the United Nations after World War II
3. In Lewin's study, how did the boys behave when they had autocratic leaders?
 - a. They had fun but got little accomplished.
 - b. They were playful and did motivated, original work.
 - c. They were hostile toward each other and got nothing done.
 - d. They worked hard but acted aggressively toward each other.
4. In Solomon Asch's experiments, about what percent of participants went along with the group's obviously mistaken judgment at least once?
 - a. 70% b. 50% c. 30% d. 90%
5. Before Stanley Milgram did his experiments on obedience, experts were asked to predict the results. The experts
 - a. overestimated people's willingness to administer shocks.
 - b. underestimated people's willingness to administer shocks.
 - c. gave accurate estimates of people's behavior.
 - d. believed most people would refuse to continue with the experiment.
6. Which light did Milgram's experiment shed on the behavior of citizens in Nazi Germany?
 - a. Situational forces can bring about blind obedience.
 - b. Personal traits of individuals are most important in determining behavior.
 - c. Cultural factors unique to Germany account for the rise of the Nazis.
 - d. Human beings enjoy being cruel when they have the opportunity.
7. Which statement most clearly reflects the fundamental attribution error?
 - a. Everyone is entitled to good medical care.
 - b. Ethical guidelines are essential to conducting responsible research.
 - c. People who are unemployed are too lazy to work.
 - d. Everyone who reads about the Milgram experiment is shocked by the results.
8. Why did the prison study conducted by Philip Zimbardo and his colleagues have to be called off?
 - a. A review committee felt that it violated ethical guidelines.
 - b. It consumed too much of the students' time.
 - c. The main hypothesis was supported, so there was no need to continue.
 - d. The situation that had been created was too dangerous to maintain.
9. How did Tom Moriarity get people on a beach to intervene during a robbery?
 - a. by creating a human bond through a simple request
 - b. by reminding people of their civic duty to turn in criminals
 - c. by making the thief look less threatening
 - d. by providing a model of responsible behavior
10. Which leadership style tends to produce hard work when the leader is watching but much less cooperation when the leader is absent?
 - a. authoritative c. democratic
 - b. autocratic d. laissez-faire
11. Typically, people who participated in Milgram's study
 - a. appeared to relish the opportunity to hurt someone else.
 - b. objected but still obeyed.
 - c. refused to continue and successfully stopped the experiment.
 - d. came to recruit others into shocking the learner.
12. Psychologists refer to the power to create subjective realities as the power of
 - a. social reinforcement. c. cognitive control.
 - b. prejudice. d. the Pygmalion effect.
13. When Jane Elliot divided her classroom of third-graders into the inferior brown-eyed people and the superior blue-eyed students, what did she observe?
 - a. The students were too young to understand what was expected.
 - b. The students refused to behave badly toward their friends and classmates.
 - c. The boys tended to go along with the categorization, but the girls did not.
 - d. The blue-eyed students acted superior and were cruel to the brown-eyed students, who acted inferior.
14. In the research carried out by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson, what caused the performance of some students to improve dramatically?
 - a. Teachers were led to expect such improvement and so changed the way they treated these students.
 - b. These students performed exceptionally well on a special test designed to predict improved performance.
 - c. Teachers gave these students higher grades because they knew the researchers were expecting the improvement.
 - d. The students felt honored to be included in the experiment and therefore were motivated to improve.
15. Robert Rosenthal demonstrated the Pygmalion effect in the classroom by showing that teachers

- behave differently toward students for whom they have high expectations in all of the following ways, *except*
- by punishing them more for goofing off.
 - by providing them with a warmer learning climate.
 - by teaching more to them than to the other students.
 - by providing more specific feedback when the student gives a wrong answer.
- What happens to low-achieving students in the “Jigsaw classroom”?
 - They tend to fall further behind.
 - They are given an opportunity to work at a lower level, thus increasing the chance of success.
 - By becoming “experts,” they improve their performance and their self-respect.
 - By learning to compete more aggressively, they become more actively involved in their own learning.
 - When Robert Cialdini cites the example of the Hare Krishnas’ behavior in giving people at airports a flower or other small gift, he is illustrating the principle of
 - commitment.
 - reciprocity.
 - scarcity.
 - consensus.
 - Salespeople might make use of the principle of scarcity by
 - filling shelves up with a product and encouraging consumers to stock up.
 - claiming they have a hard time ordering the product.
 - imposing a deadline by which the consumer must make a decision.
 - being difficult to get in touch with over the phone.
 - Nancy is participating in a bike-a-thon next month and is having a large group of friends over to her house in order to drum up sponsorships for the event. She is capitalizing on the principle of
 - liking.
 - consensus.
 - commitment.
 - authority.
 - An appropriate motto for the principle of consensus would be
 - “I’ve reasoned it through.”
 - “I am doing it of my own free will.”
 - “It will be over quickly.”
 - “Everyone else is doing it.”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Some psychologists have suggested that participants in Milgram’s research must have suffered guilt and loss of dignity and self-esteem, although they were told later that they hadn’t actually

- harmed the learner. Follow-up studies to the prison experiment revealed that the participants had not suffered long-term ill effects. What psychological principle might explain these outcomes? Did the value of the research outweigh the risks for participants? Was Milgram in a position to weigh the relative value and risks ahead of time? Would you participate in such experiments?
- What is the difference between respect for authority and blind obedience? How do you tell the difference? How would you explain the difference to a child?
- Imagine that you are on vacation in New York City and you have dropped your keys in the pond in Central Park. What could you do to counteract people’s tendencies toward diffusion of responsibility? Using what you know about social psychology, how might you increase the odds of actually getting people to help you?
- How can personal factors interact with social influences to affect behavior?
- Many of the socially undesirable aspects of human behavior (e.g., violent crime, rudeness, apathy, etc.) seem to be more likely in urban than in suburban or rural environments. How can social psychology help to explain this phenomenon?

ACTIVITIES

- Norms of social behavior include “social distances” that we place between ourselves and friends, acquaintances, and strangers. Observe and compare the social distance you maintain between yourself and family members, friends, and strangers. Purposely change how close to them you would normally stand. Observe their responses. Does anyone mention it? Do others adjust their positions to achieve normal distances?
- Look for editorials, news stories, or political cartoons that portray an international situation. Which words, labels, and images promote “us versus them” thinking? How might someone with opposite views have written the articles or drawn the cartoons differently? Do you find that the tendency to present an “us versus them” view changes over time or that it differs across cultures?
- Think of norms of proper dress or social behavior that you can violate. For example, what would happen if you wore shorts to a formal gathering? Or asked a stranger an extremely personal question? Or arrived at work in your bedroom slippers? Pay attention to your feelings as you think about carrying out these activities. What fears or inhibitions do you have? How likely is it that you could actually carry out these activities?