

# Social Psychology

**Social thinking:** involves thinking about others, especially when they engage in doing things that are unexpected.

- **Attribution:** giving credit to someone or something.
  1. **Attribution theory:** states that we have a tendency to give causal explanations for someone's behavior, often by crediting either the situation or the person's disposition.
  2. **Dispositional attribution:** attributing someone's behavior, thoughts, beliefs, etc. to the person's traits and characteristics. Ex. thinking someone is smart, lazy, etc.
  3. **Situational attribution:** attributing someone's behavior, thought's beliefs, etc. to environments factors outside of the person's control. Ex. it was the ref's fault, the test was too hard, etc.
  4. **Fundamental attribution error:** the tendency to overemphasize dispositional factors and to underestimate situational factors when making attributions about the cause of another person's behavior.
    - **Just-world phenomenon:** the tendency of people to believe the world is just, and people get what they deserve and deserve what they get.
    - **Saliency bias:** situational factors are less salient (noticeable) than dispositional factors. As a result, people focus on personality traits rather than the less social context. Ex. Lindsey Lohan is a loser, a drunk. People don't look at the lack of family structure and positive role models she's had in her life to steer her in a different direction.
  5. **Self-serving bias:** taking credit for their successes while at the same time attributing their failures to external situations beyond their control.
  6. **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** having expectations about an individual that influence your behavior towards him or her, which in turn influences they way this person behaves towards you.
- **Attitudes:** beliefs and feelings that guide behavior.
  1. **Mere exposure effect (familiarity principle):** people tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them.
  2. **Central route of persuasion:** when people focus on factual info, logical arguments, and thoughtful analysis. Ex. buying a car and looking at the gas mileage, safety ratings, etc.
  3. **Peripheral route of persuasion:** when people focus on emotional appeals in incidental cues. Ex. buying a car based on its color, sound system, etc.

4. **Foot-in-the-door:** the persuasion strategy of getting a person to agree to a modest first request as a set-up for a later, much larger, request.
5. **Reciprocity:** giving something to someone hoping you will get something back.
6. **Cognitive dissonance:** the state of psychological tension, anxiety, and discomfort that occurs when a person's attitude and behavior are inconsistent. Most people modify attitudes to reduce the dissonance. Ex. Take the example of smokers who knows that smoking is bad for them. How do they reduce the dissonance of knowing they are doing something that is harmful? There are many options:
  1. The smoker avoids reading about the ill-effects of smoking or avoids people who criticize them for smoking.
  2. The smoker will seek out information that supports the belief that smoking relaxes them.
  3. The smoker reassures him/herself that good health is not that important - after all they are not a professional sports person.
7. **Role playing:** giving a person a specific role and having his/her attitude change based on the role s/he was given. Ex. Zimbardo's prison experiment.

**Social influence:** how attitudes, beliefs, decisions, and actions are molded by social influences.

1. **Chameleon effect:** a person will unconsciously mimic or adopt behaviors, mannerisms, and actions of people or of an individual with s/he is interacting.
2. **Mood linkage:** a person's mood is based on the others of the group.
3. **Conformity:** the tendency for people to adopt the behavior, attitudes, and beliefs of other members of a group.
  - **Normative Social Influence:** influence resulting from a person's desire to gain approval or avoid rejection. A person may respect normative behavior because there may be a severe price to pay if not respected. Ex. a gang member participating in the gang's activities even though he thinks they are wrong. He's afraid of getting kicked out our worse.
  - **Informational Social Influence:** occurs when one turns to the members of one's group to obtain accurate information. A person is most likely to use informational social influence in certain situations. Ex. people not evacuating their neighborhood in light of an oncoming hurricane because no one else is evacuating. They think the neighbors must know it's not going to be that bad.
4. **Compliance:** an act of conforming, especially in a weak and subservient way. Usually someone asks you to conform.
5. **Obedience:** obeying the direct orders of an authority or person of higher status.
6. **Individual resistance:** one person can chose not to conform and can also have an effect on others. Ex. "Tank Man" in China.

7. **Group influence:** a type of conformity involving a person in a situation where s/he is unsure of the correct way to behave and will often look to others for cues concerning correct behavior.

- **Norms:** implicit or explicit rules that apply to all members of the group that govern acceptable behavior and attitudes. Norms allow for smooth social interactions. Violating these norms can be grounds for exclusion from the group.
- **Roles:** the position the person has in the group. Leader? Follower? Helper? These roles can be appointed or assumed.
- **Social loafing:** people making less effort to achieve a goal when they work in a group than when they work alone, the “slackers”.
- **Deindividuation:** the losing of one’s self-awareness and personal responsibility that can occur when a person is part of a group whose members feel anonymous. Ex. A city wins the Superbowl and while the people are celebrating in the streets, they get out of control and start flipping over cars. These people would never do something like that along; but, because there is a group of people doing it, no one will ever be able to identify everyone.
- **Social facilitation:** the tendency for an individual’s performance to improve when simple or well-learned tasks are performed in the presence of others.
- **Social impairment (inhibition):** the tendency for an individual’s performance to decline when complex or poorly-learned tasks are performed in the presence of others.
- **Group polarization:** the tendency for groups to make decisions that are more extreme than the initial inclination of its members. Ex. a group trying to plan prom but everyone has such elaborate ideas; no one can make a decision.
- **Groupthink:** phenomenon that occurs within a group of people, in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an incorrect or deviant decision-making outcome. Ex. Bay of Pigs, Congress and pork barrel spending.
- **Minority influence:** the minority of a group can have an effect on the group. Ex. The juror in *Twelve Angry Men*.

**Social Relations:** how people relate to one another which doesn’t always have to be positive.

1. **Treatment of group members:** we treat people in a group depending on how we perceive that person and the group.

- **Prejudice:** a learned prejudgment toward people solely based on their membership in a specific social group. The prejudice can be positive or negative but most research focuses on the causes and consequences of negative prejudice.
  - **Discrimination:** the differential treatment of others, usually negative.
  - **Ingroups:** people with whom one shares a common identity.
  - **Outgroups:** those perceived as different from one's in-group.
  - **Ingroup Bias:** the tendency to favor one's own group.
  - **Stereotypes:** generalized beliefs about a certain group, sometimes accurate but often overgeneralized.
  - **Scapegoat theory:** people look for someone to blame when things go wrong, usually fueled by prejudice. Ex. After 9/11, Americans lashing out at Arab-Americans, the US putting Japanese-Americans in internment camps after the attack on Pearl Harbor.
  - **Ethnocentrism:** the tendency to consider other cultures, customs, and values as inferior to one's own. Ex. the US trying to change Iraq's government to a democracy.
  - **Contact theory:** lessening the tensions between two groups by putting them together on an equal playing field. Usually the two groups have a goal to reach and they have to work together to reach that goal. Ex. tribes merging in Survivor.
  - **Jigsaw classroom:** a method of organizing classroom activity that makes students dependent on each other to succeed. Higher achieving kids are usually paired with lower achieving kids.
2. **Altruism:** putting your own welfare aside to help others.
  3. **Bystander effect:** individuals are less likely to assist in an emergency situation when other people are present. Ex. the murder of Kitty Genovese.
    - **Diffusion of responsibility:** explains the bystander effect: people are less likely to take action or feel a sense of responsibility in the presence of a large group of people. Ex. in the case of Kitty Genovese, people assumed others called the police.
    - **Reciprocity norm:** people are more likely to help someone if they are going to get something out of it.
  4. **Aggression:** behavior that is intended to cause harm.

- **Instrumental aggression:** aggression that is caused by the satisfaction of obtaining a goal. Ex. fighting in a store to get the “must have” Christmas present.
  - **Hostile aggression:** results when a person feels pain, anger, or frustration. Ex. road rage
  - **Frustration-aggression principle:** a principle in which frustration (caused by the blocking of an attempt to achieve a desired goal) creates anger, which can generate aggression.
5. **Attraction:** being drawn to a person.
6. **Conflict & Peacemaking:** working with each other to overcome problems.
- **Non-zero sum game:** both group participants all gain or suffer together.
  - **Social trap:** a term used by psychologists to describe a situation in which a group of people act to obtain short-term individual gains, which in the long run leads to a loss for the group as a whole. Ex. people enjoy eating unhealthy junk food, but pay for it later with the problems associated with obesity.
  - **Mirror-image perceptions:** each side views itself as ethical and peaceful and views the other as evil and aggressive.
  - **Superordinate goals:** shared goals that override differences among people that cannot be achieved without a joint effort. Ex. Muzafer Sherif Robbers Cave Experiment.
  - **Conciliation (GRIT):** a bargaining strategy used by both sides to help maintain the peace. GRIT stands for Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension reduction. Researchers have found that reciprocal conciliatory acts can begin the process of reducing tensions between hostile groups. Ex. diplomats often use reciprocal acts to begin peace talks, such as with the case of Israel and Arab nations, they often start talks with the exchange of prisoners.

## Social Psych Key People:

**Fritz Heider:** proposed the Attribution Theory.

**Robert Rosenthal & Lenore Jacobson:** studied the self-fulfilling prophecy through the “Oak Hill” experiment.

**Jane Elliot:** divided her class into blue eyes and brown eyes to teach her kids about discrimination.

**Leon Festinger:** proposed the idea of cognitive dissonance that suggests that we have an inner drive to hold all our attitudes and beliefs in harmony and to avoid disharmony (or dissonance).

**Philip Zimbardo:** studied role playing through the Stanford prison experiment.

**Solomon Asch:** ran the conformity experiment involving people.

**Stanley Milgram:** ran the obedience experiment with the “teachers” and the “learners” in which the “learners” were “shocked” every time they gave a wrong answer. 2/3 of the “teachers” shocked people to a death level.

**Walter Lippman:** coined the term “stereotype”.

**Kitty Genovese:** the woman who kept calling for help as she was being stabbed and no one would help her. Her murder focused public attention on the reasons why bystanders failed to come to her rescue.

**Muzafer Sherif:** ran the Robbers Cave Experiment in which 11- and 12- year-old boys were randomly assigned into two groups. The groups were pitted against each other and turned into rivals. Sherif used superordinate goals to reduce hostility between the two groups. For example, Sherif deliberately clogged the camp’s water system, thus forcing the boys to work together to fix it.

**Bibb Latane & John Darley:** created situations to test bystander intervention and the diffusion of responsibility in non-emergency situations.

**Elliot Aronson & Marti Gonzales:** devised the jigsaw classroom to help raise the self-efficacy of minority children.

**Norman Triplett:** studied social facilitation and social impairment.