

# Chapter 20

## Attitudes, Culture, and Human Relations



# Attitudes and Beliefs

- Learned tendency to respond to people, objects, or institutions in a positive or negative way
  - Summarize your evaluation of objects
- Belief Component: What a person believes about the object of an attitude
- Emotional Component: Feelings towards the object of an attitude
- Action Component: One's actions towards various people, objects or institutions



# Attitude Formation

- Direct Contact: Personal experience with the object of the attitude
- Interaction with Others: Influence of discussions with people holding a particular attitude
- Child Rearing: Effects of parental values, beliefs, and practices
- Group Membership: Social influences from belonging to certain groups
- Mass Media: All media that reach large audiences (magazines, television)
- Mean Worldview: Viewing the world and other people as dangerous and threatening



# Attitude Measurement and Change

- Social Distance Scale: Scale where the degree of a person's willingness to have contact with a member of another group is measured
- Attitude Scale: Statements on a scale expressing various possible views on an issue
- Reference Group: Any group a person identifies with and uses as a standard for social comparison
- Persuasion: Deliberate attempt to change attitudes or beliefs with information and arguments
  - Communicator: Person presenting arguments or information
  - Message: Content of communicator's arguments
  - Audience: Person or group to whom a persuasive message is directed



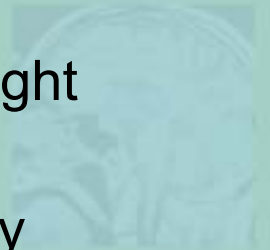
# Consumer Psychology

- Applied field that focuses on how consumers behave
- Marketing Research: Public opinion polling where people are asked to give personal impressions of products, services or advertising
- Brand Image: Mental picture consumers have of a product, especially with regard to its emotional meaning



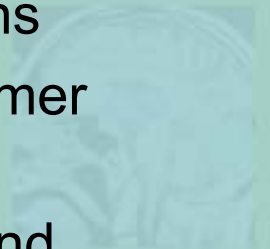
## Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger)

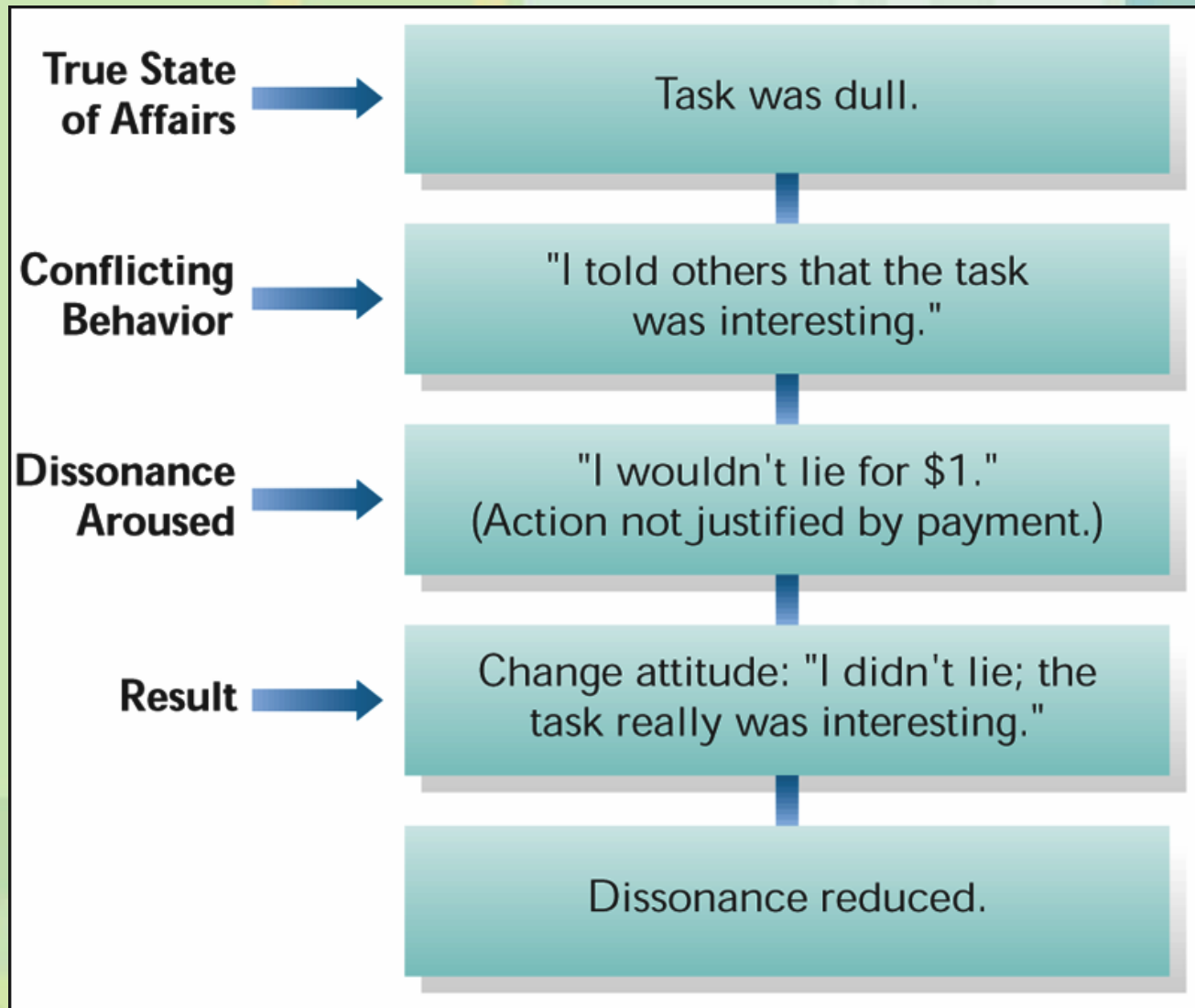
- Contradicting or clashing thoughts, beliefs, attitudes or perceptions.
  - We need to have consistency in our thoughts, perceptions, and images of ourselves
  - Underlies attempts to convince ourselves we did the right thing
- Justification: Degree to which one's actions are justified by rewards or other circumstances



# Brainwashing

- Brainwashing: Engineered or forced attitude change requiring a captive audience
- Generally three steps to brainwash someone:
  - Unfreezing: Loosening of former values and convictions
  - Change: When the brainwashed person abandons former beliefs
  - Refreezing: Rewarding and solidifying new attitudes and beliefs





**Figure 20.2**

Summary of the Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) study from the viewpoint of a person experiencing cognitive dissonance.

# Cults

- Group that professes great devotion to a person or people and follows that person/people almost without question.
  - Leader's personality is usually more important than the issues he/she preaches
  - Cult members usually victimized by the leader(s)
  - Will try to recruit potential converts at a time of need, especially when a sense of belonging is most attractive to potential converts
    - Look for college students and young adults
  - Some examples of cults: People's Temple and Jim Jones; Heaven's Gate; Branch Davidians
  - Where does "Scientology" fit?



# Prejudice

- Negative emotional attitude held against members of a specific social group
- Racism: Racial prejudice that can be found in institutions (schools, etc.) and is enforced by existing social structure
- Sexism: Prejudice against men OR women, based solely on gender
- Ageism: Prejudice based on age; somewhat common in the USA
- Discrimination: Unequal treatment of people who should have the same rights as others
- Personal Prejudice: When members of another racial or ethnic group are perceived as a threat to one's own self-interests
- Group Prejudice: Occurs when a person conforms to group norms



# Prejudiced Personality and Intergroup Conflict

- Authoritarian Personality: Marked by rigidity, inhibition, prejudice and oversimplification
- Ethnocentrism: Placing one's group at the center, usually by rejecting all other groups
- Dogmatism: Unwarranted positiveness or certainty in matters of belief or opinion.
  - Difficult for dogmatic people to change their beliefs
- Social Stereotypes: Oversimplified images of people who belong to a particular social group
- Symbolic Prejudice: Prejudice expressed in a disguised fashion
  - Prejudice is socially unacceptable but will still express prejudice in disguised form



## Other Concepts Relating to Prejudice

- **Status Inequalities:** Differences in power, prestige or privileges of two or more people or groups
- **Equal-status Contact:** Social interaction that occurs on equal level, without obvious differences in power or status
- **Superordinate Goal:** Goal that exceeds or overrides all other goals, making other goals less important
- **Mutual Interdependence:** When two or more people must depend on each other to meet each person's goals
- **Jigsaw Classroom:** Each student only gets a piece of information needed to complete a problem or prepare for a test. In order to succeed and get all pieces, students must all work together
- **Prejudicial stereotypes** tend to be very irrational



# Aggression

- Any action carried out with the intention of harming another person
- Ethologists believe that aggression is innate in all animals, including humans
  - Ethologist: Studies natural behavior patterns of animals
  - Appears to be a relationship between aggression and hypoglycemia, allergy, and certain brain injuries and disorders
  - Certain brain areas can trigger or end aggressive behavior
- Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis: Frustration tends to lead to aggression
- Aggression Cues: Signals that are associated with aggression



# Social Learning Theory (Bandura) and Television

- Social Learning Theory: Combines learning principles with cognitive processes, socialization and modeling
  - No instinctive (innate) desires for shooting guns, knife fights and so on
  - Aggression must be learned
- Aggressive Pornography: Depictions in which violence, threats, or obvious power differences are used to force someone (usually a woman) to engage in sex



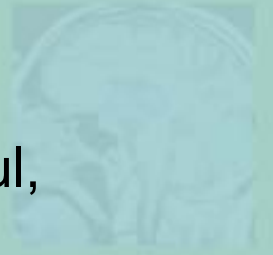
# Social Learning Theory (Bandura) and Television Continued

- Disinhibition: Removal of inhibition; results in acting-out behavior that normally would be restrained
- Weapons Effect: Observation that weapons serve as strong cues for aggressive behavior
- Television seems to be able to cause desensitization to violence
  - Desensitization: Reduced emotional sensitivity



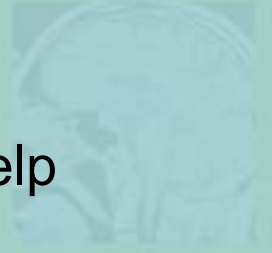
# Preventing Aggression

- Prosocial Behavior: Behavior towards others that is helpful, constructive or altruistic
- Anger Control: Personal strategies for reducing or curbing anger.
  - Define problem as precisely as possible
  - Make a list of possible solutions
  - Rank likely success of each solution
  - Choose a solution and try it
  - Assess how successful the solution was, and make adjustments if necessary



# Prosocial Behavior and Bystander Apathy

- Bystander Apathy: Unwillingness of bystanders to offer help during emergencies
  - Related to number of people present
  - More potential helpers present, *lower the chances* that help will be given



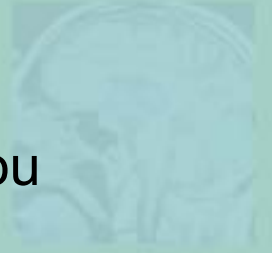
## Decision Points Reached Before Giving Help

- Noticing the person in trouble
- Defining an Emergency: Until someone declares the situation an emergency, no one acts
- Taking Responsibility: Assume responsibility to help
  - Diffusion of Responsibility: Spreading responsibility to act among several people
- Select a Course of Action



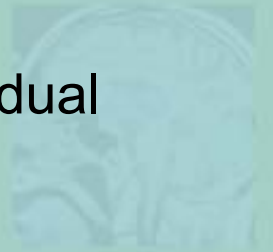
# Empathy Concepts

- Empathic Arousal: Emotional arousal that occurs when you feel some of the person's pain, fear or anguish
- Empathy-Helping Relationship: We are most likely to help person in need when we feel emotions such as empathy and compassion



# Multiculturalism

- Gives equal status to different ethnic, racial and cultural groups
- To Break Stereotypes:
  - Seek individuating information
    - Information that helps us see a person as an individual and not as a member of a group
  - Don't believe just-world beliefs
    - Belief that people generally get what they deserve



# More Ways to Break Stereotypes

- Note self-fulfilling prophecies
  - Expectation that prompts people to act in ways that make expectation come true
- Different does not mean inferior
  - Social Competition: Rivalry among groups, each of which regards itself as superior to others
- Look for Commonalities



# Sociobiology

- Theory that many human behaviors have roots in heredity
  - War, competition, conformity, male-female differences and many other behaviors are innate
- Biological Determinism: Belief that behavior is controlled by biological processes, such as heredity or evolution
  - Extreme view questioned by many biologists
- Some social behavior is based on genetics and evolution; however, cannot ignore social, cultural, emotional and intellectual origins of human behavior

