

Basic Principles of Psychology (PSY1030)
Basic Principles of Psychology for Educators (PSY2012)

Social Psychology

Department of Psychological Studies
HKIEd

Lecture Outline

- What is Social Psychology?
- Social Influence
 - Conformity
 - Compliance
 - Obedience
- Social Cognition
 - The ABC Components of Attitudes
 - Attitude change: Persuasion
 - Cognitive dissonance
- Liking and Loving: Interpersonal Attraction
 - The rules of attraction
 - The Triangular Theory of Love
- Why People Won't Help: The Bystander Effect
 - Diffusion of responsibility
 - Five decision points in helping behavior

What is Social Psychology?

- Social psychology
 - ▣ Scientific study of how thoughts, feelings, and behavior are influenced by others
- Social psychologists are interested in understanding how and why the social environment shapes the thoughts and feelings of the individual

Three Areas of Social Psychology

- Social influence
 - ▣ The ways behavior can be affected by other people
 - ▣ The effect that words, actions, or mere presence of other people have on our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, or behavior
- Social cognition
 - ▣ The ways people think about themselves and other people
 - ▣ How people select, interpret, remember and use social information to make judgments and decisions
- Social interaction
 - ▣ The positive and negative aspects of people relating to others

Social Influence

The 1st Major Area of Social Psychology



Have you ever:

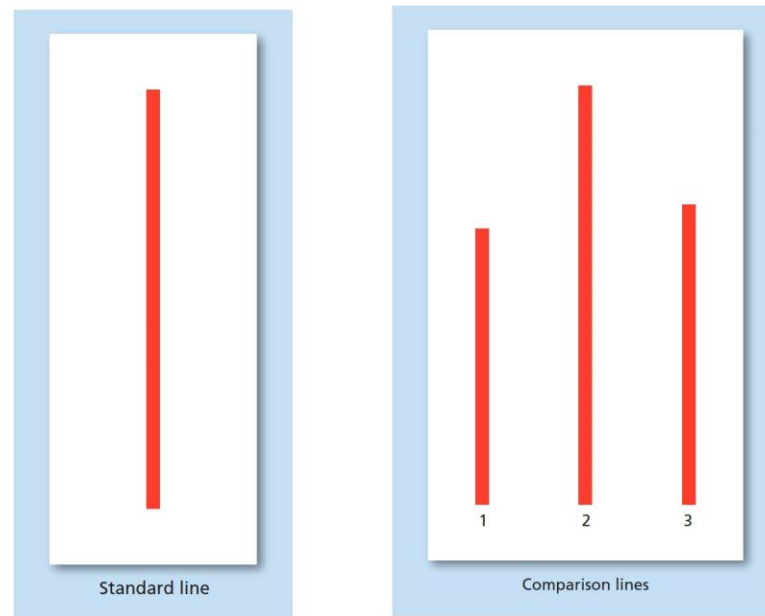
- ▣ Asked a friend what was appropriate to wear to a dinner, party, or wedding?
- ▣ Agreed to attend a social event because someone else asked you to?
- ▣ Changed your behavior in response to a direct order from a police officer, parent, teacher, or school official?

Social Influence: Conformity

- Conformity:
 - ▣ Changing one's own behavior to more closely match or be the same as the actions of others
 - ▣ Solomon Asch Study (1951)
 - Q: Would a participant change his/her response in order to fit in with group response?

Asch's Experiment on Conformity

- Which of the lines on the right most closely matches the standard line on the left?



What would you say if you were in a group of 6 others, and all agreed the answer was 3?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYIh4MkcfJA>

Asch's Experiment on Conformity: The Results

- When alone, 95% of participants got all the answers correct
- **But when the group gave the wrong answer,** the participants conformed to the group answer over one-third of time
- Conformity decreased if there was just one confederate who gave the correct answer
- Greater conformity in collectivist cultures
- **Conclusion:** People faced with strong group consensus sometimes go along *even though they think the others may be wrong*

Compliance

- Compliance
 - ▣ People change behavior as a result of another person or group asking or directing them to change
- *How is Compliance different from Obedience?:* In compliance, the person asking the other to change has **no authority** over the other

Four Ways to Gain Compliance

- Foot-in-the-door technique

First make a small request, then a large one

- Door-in-the-face technique

First make an unreasonably large request, then a smaller one

- Lowball technique

First make a reasonable request; then reveal further costs

- That's-not-all technique

First make a large request, then offer a bonus or discount

- Done before the target person can make a decision

For example...

- **Foot-in-the-door technique**
 - Your neighbor asks you to collect his mail while he's on vacation. You say yes... then he asks you if you could water his plants too?
- **Door-in-the-face technique**
 - Your neighbor asks you to walk his dog every day. You say no... so he asks if you could water his plants instead
- **Lowball technique**
 - Your neighbor asks if you could take care of his apartment. You say yes, not knowing what you'll need to do. Later he reveals that his plants need to be watered every day
- **That's-not-all technique**
 - Your neighbor says he'll pay you if you water his plants. Before you've decided, he says that he'll ALSO take you out to lunch at a nice restaurant.

Can you think of how to use these...?

- To get your dorm roommate to pick up his dirty socks that he always puts on the floor?
- Foot-in-the-door technique
 - ▣ Asking for a small commitment
 - ▣ After gaining compliance, asking for a bigger commitment
- Door-in-the-face technique
 - ▣ Asking for a large commitment and being refused
 - ▣ Next ask for a smaller commitment
- Lowball technique
 - ▣ Getting a commitment from a person
 - ▣ Then raise the cost of that commitment
- That's-not-all technique
 - ▣ Sales technique where persuader makes offer
 - ▣ Adds something extra to make offer look better
 - ▣ Done before the target person can make a decision

Can you think of how to use these...?

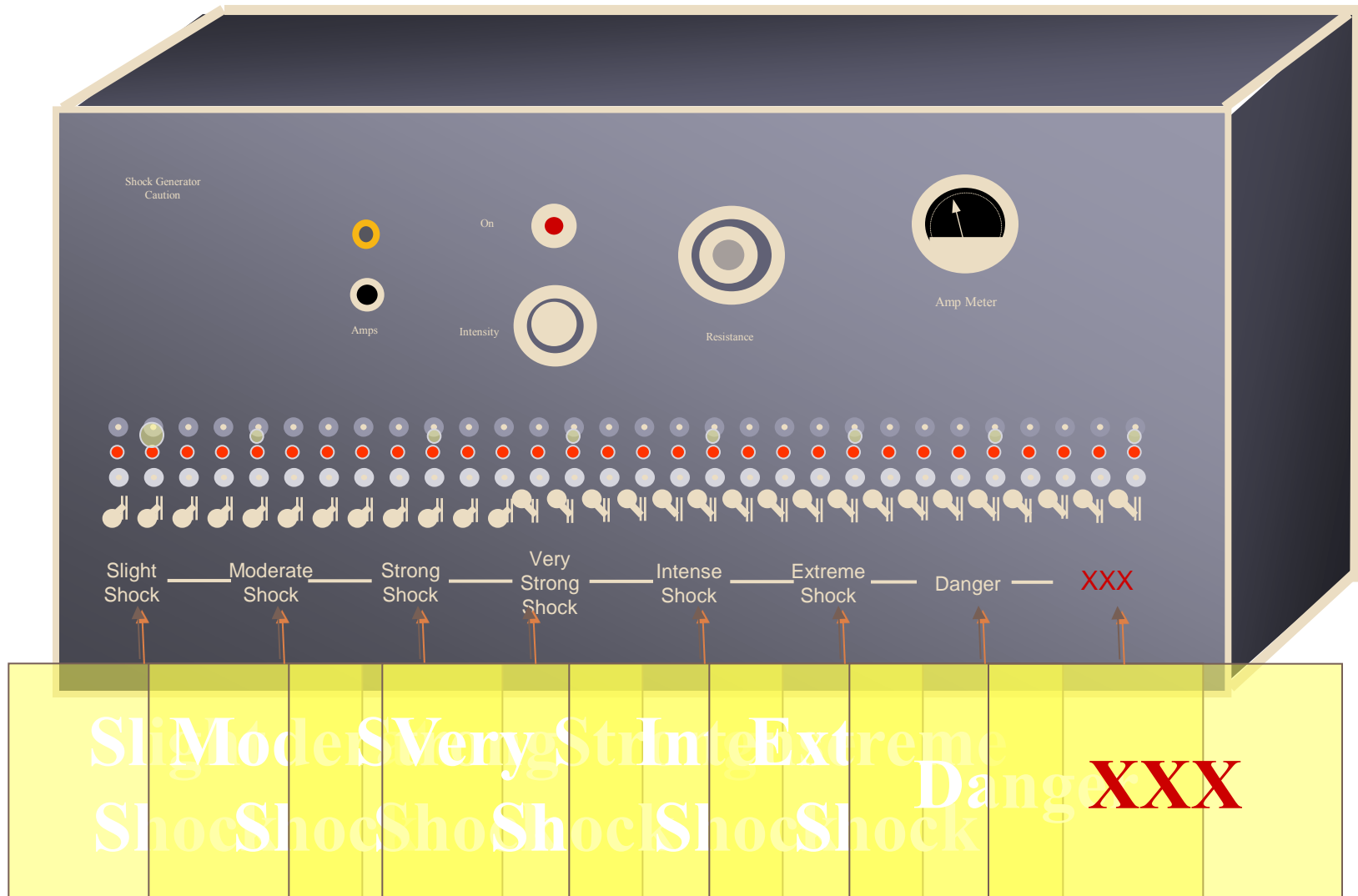
- To get your dorm roommate to pick up his dirty socks?
- Foot-in-the-door technique
 - ▣ "Could you pick up this sock?" "OK!" "Thanks! It would be nice if you could do that every day..."
- Door-in-the-face technique
 - ▣ "I think you should sweep the floor every day." "NO!" "Well, could you at least pick up your socks?"
- Lowball technique
 - ▣ "Hey, would you like to spend just five minutes to clean up the room with me?" "Sure!" "Great! Could you first pick up your socks?"
- That's-not-all technique
 - ▣ "If you pick up your socks, I will buy you lunch!" "Well..." "AND, I will buy you a coffee too!"

Obedience

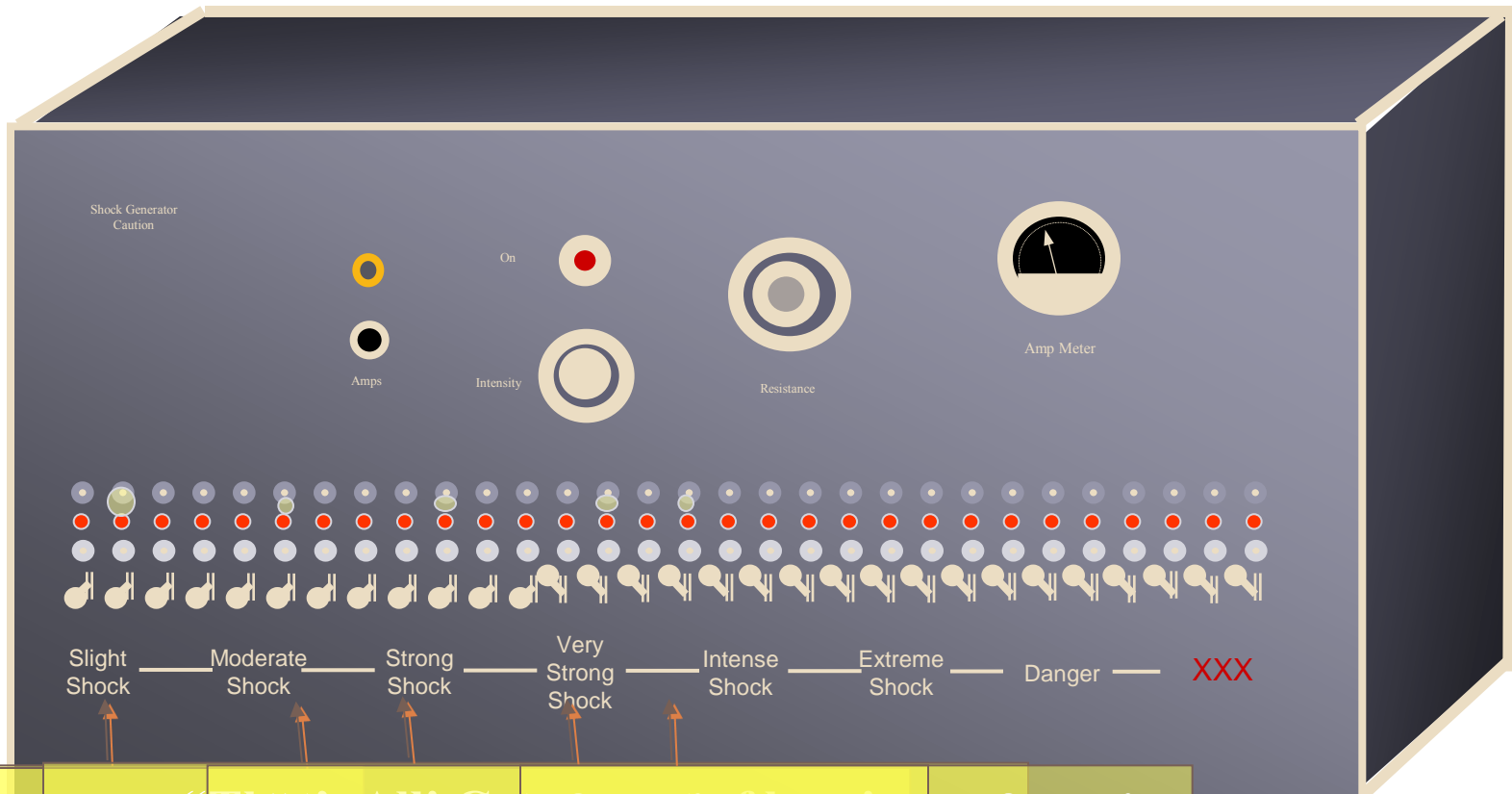
- Obedience
 - ▣ Changing one's behavior at the command of **an authority figure**
 - ▣ Based on the belief that authorities have the right to make requests
- Milgram study
 - ▣ What would you do if an experimenter studying "the effects of punishment on memory" asked you to **deliver painful electric shocks to a fellow participant?**
 - ▣ In first experiments, 65% of "teachers" went all the way to experiment's 450-volt shock level

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCVII-_4GZQ

Milgram's Shock Generator



Statements By Shock Recipients:



Experimenter:

**“Treat no response as a wrong response.
Deliver the next higher level of shock.”**

How Many Obeyed?

Implication: Results suggest it is the authority's orders that were crucial (and not other factors such as participant aggressiveness)



Social Cognition

The 2nd Major Area of Social Psychology

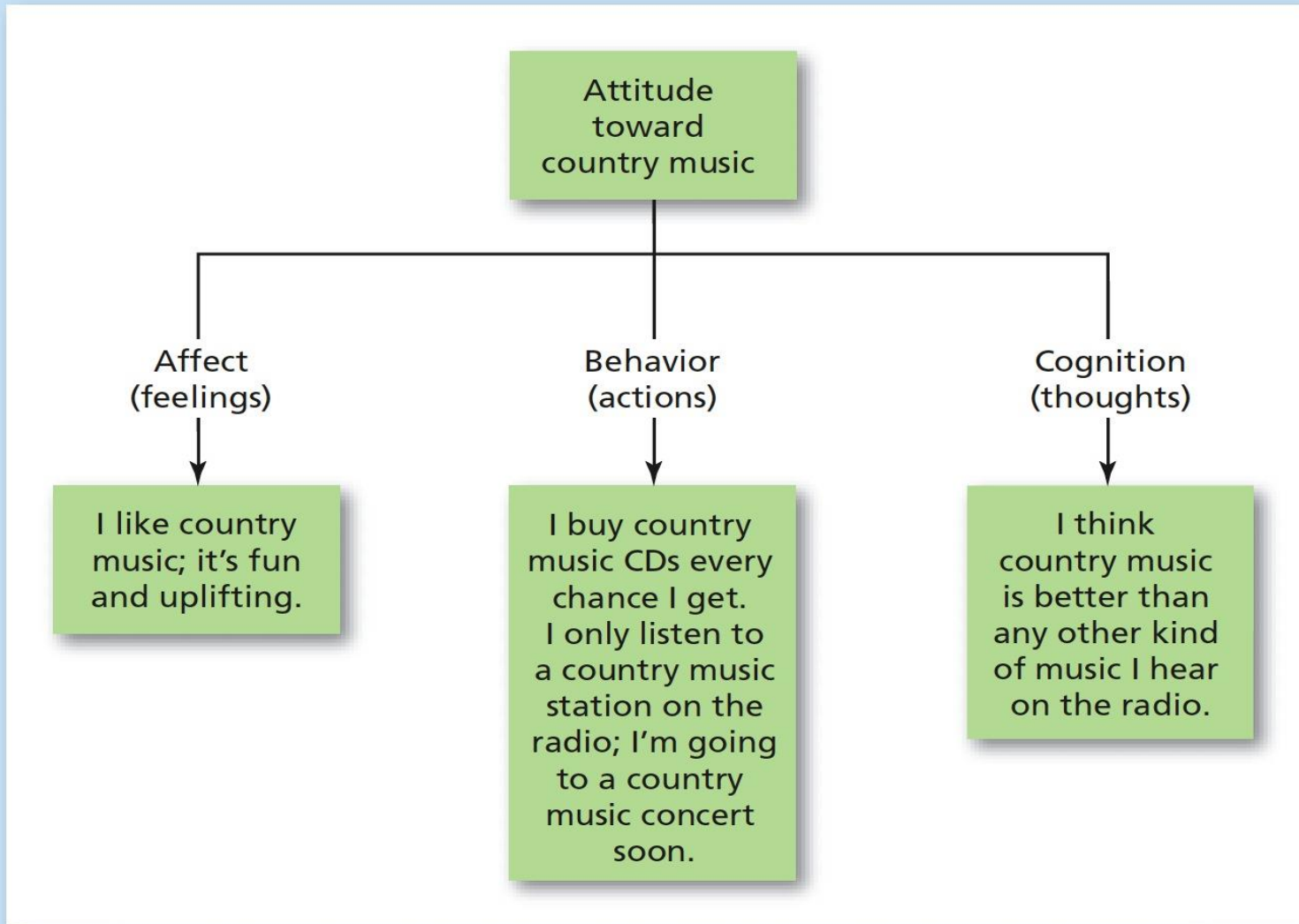
Social Cognition: Attitudes

- Attitude
 - ▣ Tendency to respond positively or negatively toward person, object, idea, or situation

Three Components of Attitudes

- Affective component
 - ▣ Emotional
 - ▣ The person's emotions and affect towards the object
- Behavioral component
 - ▣ Action taken
 - ▣ How person tends to act towards the object
- Cognitive component
 - ▣ Thoughts about person, object or situation
- These are not always highly related to each other
- Attitudes tend to be poor predictors of actual behavior

Three Components of Attitudes



What's your attitude towards..

- The “Gangnam style” dance video?
- What are the components of your attitude? Are they consistent?
 - ▣ Affect:
 - Do you **feel** positive, negative, or neutral about it?
 - ▣ Behavior:
 - Have you **danced** “Gangnam style?”
 - ▣ Cognitive:
 - Do you **think** that it's high-quality? Rude? Funny? Rebellious? Worth watching or not? Etc.

Persuasion

- Attempt to change the belief, opinion, position, or course of action (behavior) of another person
- Done through argument, pleading, or explanation
- How can we know if persuasion will work? Let's analyze:
 - ▣ 3 components of persuasion
 - ▣ 2 routes to persuasion

Persuasion

- 3 Factors affect the outcome of any persuasion attempt:
 - ▣ Source of the message
 - Who/what communicates the message
 - ▣ Message itself
 - What is said to persuade you
 - ▣ Target audience
 - Who/what receives the message

I would like to PERSUADE you...

- That Social Psychology is important!

- Will my lecture persuade you? What factors will affect how persuasive my lecture is?
 - ▣ Source of the message: Anything about ME.
 - E.g. If I am a professor, my lecture might be more persuasive than if I'm a student.
 - ▣ Message itself: Anything about the CONTENT of my lecture.
 - E.g. If the information is useful, it will be more persuasive.
 - ▣ Target audience: Anything about YOU.
 - E.g. If you are interested in psychology already, you will be more easily persuaded.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model

- An explanation of the two ways (routes) in which persuasive communications can cause attitude change, depending on TARGET characteristics.
- *The Central Route* is followed when people are motivated and able to pay close attention to the arguments in the communication.
- *The Peripheral Route* is followed when people are not really paying attention to the arguments but are instead influenced by surface characteristics.

The Central Route to Persuasion

Sometimes, people are motivated to pay attention to the facts in a communication, and so they will be most persuaded when these facts are logically compelling.

Central Route to Persuasion

The case whereby people think more about (elaborate on) a persuasive communication, listening carefully to and thinking about the arguments, as occurs when people have both the **ability and the motivation** to listen carefully to a communication.

The Peripheral Route to Persuasion

Other times, people are not motivated to pay attention to the facts; instead, they notice only the surface characteristics of the message, such as how long it is and who is delivering it.

Peripheral Route to Persuasion

When people do not think more about (elaborate on) the arguments in a persuasive communication but are instead influenced by peripheral cues.

Persuasion Attempt

Audience Factors

Processing Approach

Persuasion Outcome

High motivation and ability to think about the message

Central processing, focused on the quality of the message arguments.

Lasting change that resists fading and counterattacks

Low motivation or ability to think about the message

Peripheral processing, focused on surface features such as the communicator's attractiveness or the number of arguments presented.

Temporary change that that is susceptible to fading and counterattacks

Message

I would like to PERSUADE you...

- That Social Psychology is important!
- Will my lecture persuade you? For what reasons?



CENTRAL ROUTE TO PERSUASION

Persuasion occurs if the arguments are compelling.



Result

Attitude change that is long-lasting and resistant to change.

Persuasive Communication



Do people have the ability and the motivation to pay attention?



YES!

My, I never thought of that before!



Excellent point.

PERIPHERAL ROUTE TO PERSUASION

Persuasion occurs if peripheral cues (such as the length of communication or the attributes of the communicator) are compelling.



Result

Attitude change that is temporary and susceptible to further change.



This speaker is a babe.



Boy, this speaker could talk all day. WOW!



This speaker is such a nice, friendly person.

I would like to PERSUADE you...

- That Social Psychology is important!

- Will my lecture persuade you? For what reasons?
 - Central route:
 - The CONTENT of the lecture convinces you. For example, you understand the research and are convinced.
 - You are more likely to keep this opinion later.
 - Peripheral route:
 - Other things convince you. For example, I am a professor, so you guess what I'm talking about must be important!
 - You are more likely to change your mind later.

Cognitive Dissonance

- Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger) explains what happens when there are discrepancies (differences) between people's attitudes and their behaviors.
- Dissonance is an aversive motivational state that results when our behavior is inconsistent with our attitudes
 - It is greatest when the attitudes and behavior are important to the self.
- Dissonance creates psychological tension that people are motivated to reduce.

Do you have cognitive dissonance about “Gangnam Style?”

- Cognition: You think that the “Gangnam style” fad is stupid
- But...
- Behavior: You dance “Gangnam style” frequently
- Result: An unpleasant feeling of DISSONANCE!

Cognitive Dissonance

- Three choices for reducing dissonance:
 - ▣ Change conflicting behavior to match attitude
 - ▣ Change conflicting thoughts (cognition) to justify behavior
 - ▣ Form new thoughts (cognitions) to justify behavior



① Here you are, a reasonably happy, content person with a good amount of self-esteem.



⑤ You could change your behavior...



② Then you do something that goes against your image of yourself...
Something stupid, immoral or foolish.



③ You experience Dissonance!
An unpleasant arousal state that you are motivated to reduce!



④ But HOW?



⑥ You could change one of your cognitions...

Ah... so relaxing.



⑦ Or you could add consonant cognitions.



⑧ Successfully doing any of these three will reduce your dissonance. You're a happy camper once again!

Festinger & Carlsmith (1959)

- Festinger & Carlsmith (1959):
 - Do a very boring psychology experiment
 - “Please turn these pegs over and over again for an hour.”
 - “Oh no, the confederate isn’t here! Would you be willing to tell the next participant that this was a fun experiment? I’ll pay you…”



Inducement

Attitude

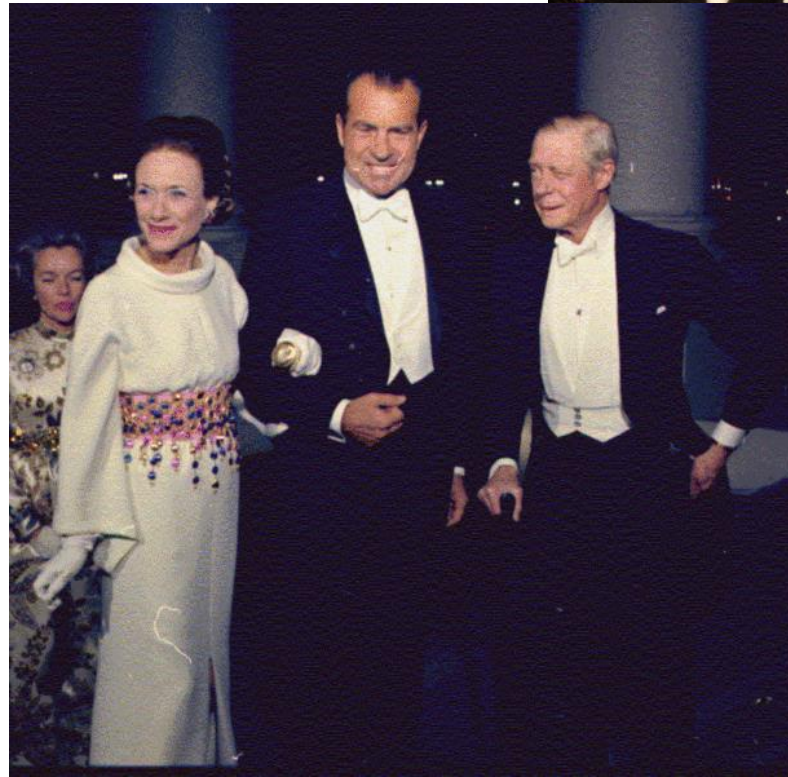
| | |
|---------|-------|
| \$1 | +1.35 |
| \$20 | - 0.5 |
| Control | - .45 |

*Based on a -5 to +5 scale, where -5 means "extremely boring" and +5 means "extremely interesting"

Social Interaction

The 3rd Major Area of Social Psychology

Liking and Loving: Interpersonal Attraction



- Have you ever had strong feelings for another person and wondered whether or not you were really “in love?”
- What do you look for in a potential **long-term partner?**

The Rules of Attraction

- Factors involved in interpersonal attraction:
 - ▣ Physical Attractiveness
 - More important early in a relationship
 - ▣ Proximity
 - Physical or geographical nearness
 - Repeated exposure may increase attraction
 - ▣ Similarity
 - We prefer being with those who are similar

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love

- Three components of love:
 - Intimacy
 - Close emotional ties
 - Psychological, not physical
 - Passion
 - Physical aspect of love, not just sex
 - Commitment
 - The length and security of the relationship (whether to keep it or not)



Liking

Intimacy



Companionate

Commitment



Romantic Love

Passion

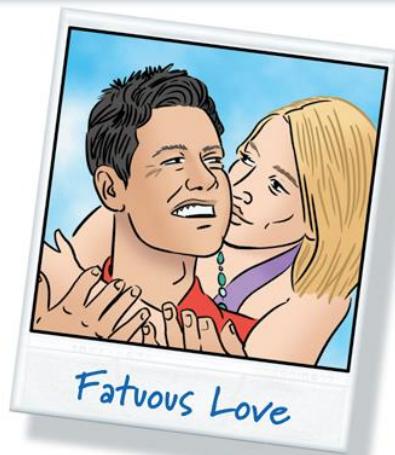


Consummate Love

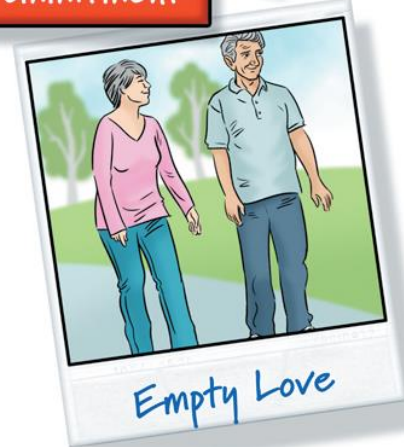
Intimacy + Passion + Commitment



Infatuation

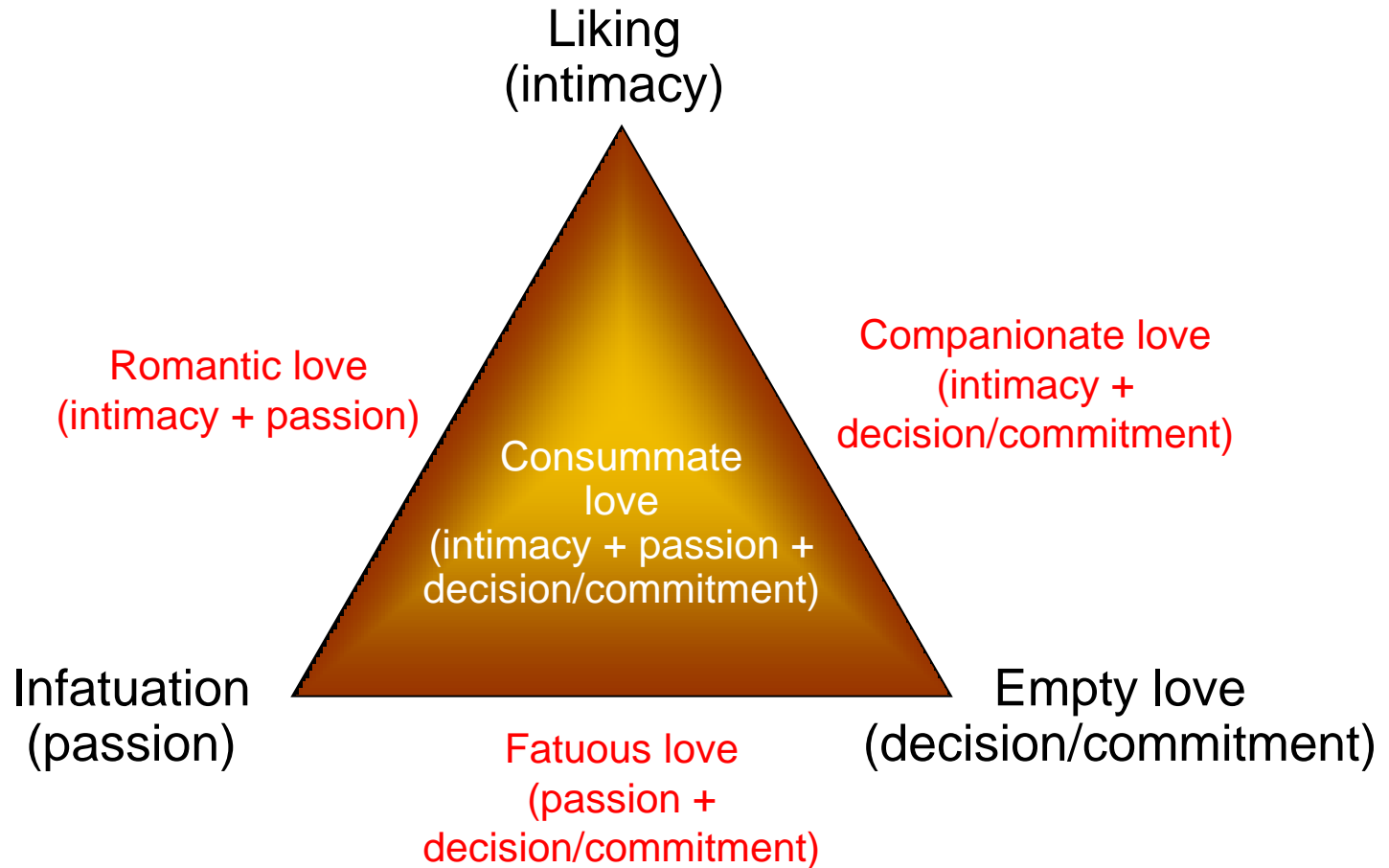


Fatuous Love



Empty Love

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love



Is it true love?

- What are these people missing? Would you call it “true love?” :
 - ▣ Fred and Fanny always kiss and have been together for years, but they never really talk
 - ▣ Robert and Rebecca have long in-depth discussions and get butterflies in the stomach whenever they see one another, but aren’ t officially boy/girlfriend yet
 - ▣ Chris and Cathy have been married for 22 years and are really fond of one another, but have no sex life

- Do you agree that all 3 components are needed for it to be “true love?”

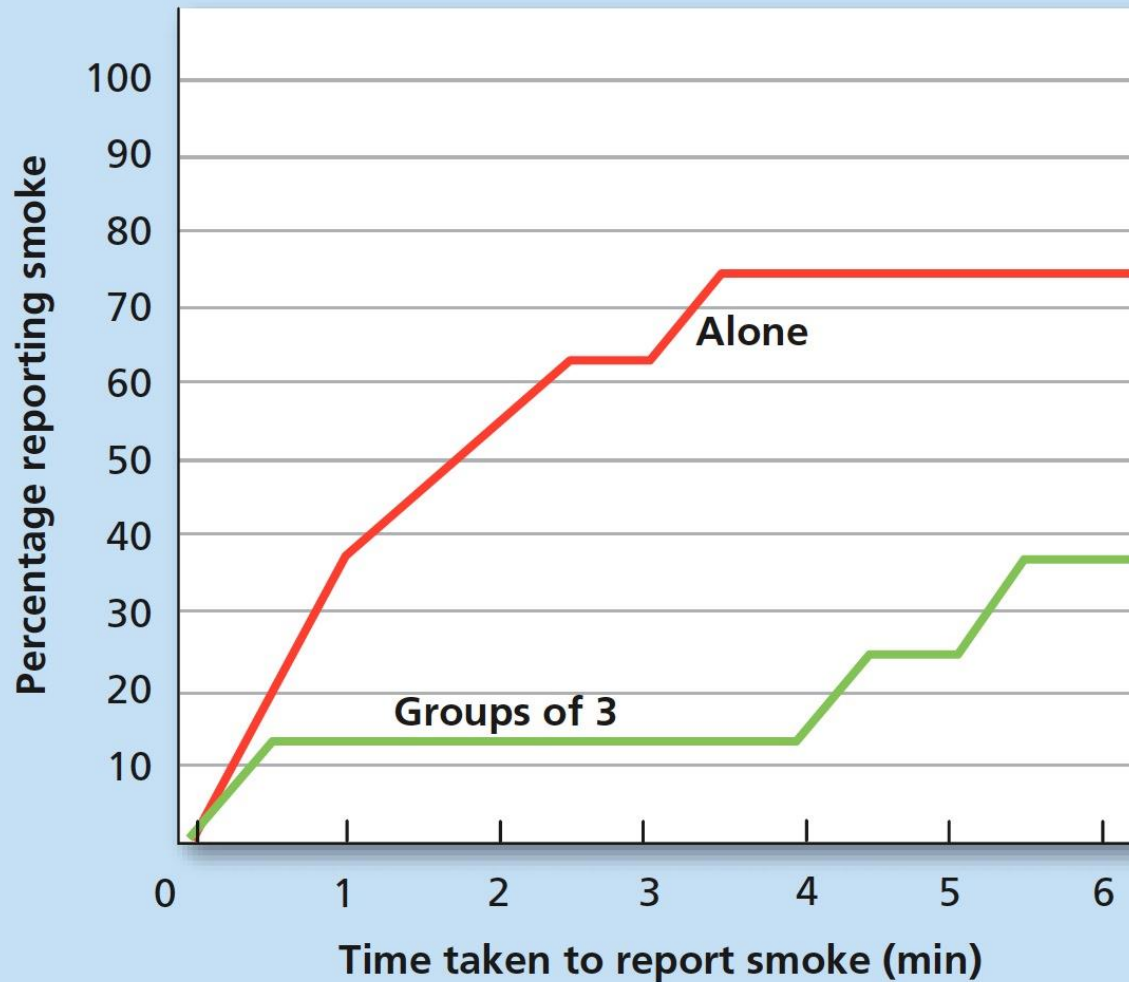
Bystander Effect

- Bystander effect
 - ▣ Definition: The effect the presence of other people has on the decision to help or not help
 - ▣ Surprisingly, help becomes **less likely** as the number of bystanders increases

Bystander Effect

- Darley and Latané (1968)
- Individuals are less likely to help in an emergency when others are present
- Diffusion of responsibility
 - Individual fails to take responsibility for actions or inaction
 - Presence of other people = are seen as sharing the responsibility

Study Results



Five Steps in Making a Decision to Help

- Helping is rare because it has to get through 5 decisions:

table 10.2 Help or Don't Help: Five Decision Points

| DECISION POINT | DESCRIPTION | FACTORS INFLUENCING DECISION |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Noticing | Realizing that there is a situation that might be an emergency. | Hearing a loud crash or a cry for help. |
| Defining an Emergency | Interpreting the cues as signaling an emergency. | Loud crash is associated with a car accident; people are obviously hurt. |
| Taking Responsibility | Personally assuming the responsibility to act. | A single bystander is much more likely to act than when others are present (Latané & Darley, 1969). |
| Planning a Course of Action | Deciding how to help and what skills might be needed. | People who feel they have the necessary skills to help are more likely to help. |
| Taking Action | Actually helping. | Costs of helping (e.g., danger to self) must not outweigh the rewards of helping. |

- What could you do to make sure someone helps you in an emergency?

How do the five steps apply?

- Hannah is a student who lives in the dormitory. She is very depressed, and her boyfriend just broke up with her. She wants to commit suicide, so she collects all of her medicine bottles on her desk. Just as she's about to take the pills, her roommate walks into the room.
- What will determine whether or not the roommate helps Hannah?
 - ▣ Noticing; Defining an Emergency; Taking Responsibility; Planning a Course of Action; Taking Action