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PSYC 101 – 004

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Social Psychology (Mod 36-38)

Multiple times I have caught myself acting different in certain situations. It all depends on who is around me and what their expectations are. It shows that all of us are affected by social presence. I have also been a victim of the foot-in-the-door phenomenon. Many of my friends have gotten me to do things that would seem odd or out of character for me to do while I am alone. I find it very interesting that our beliefs can be altered by our behavior. The simple “Fake it till you make it” trick can be applied and actually show some results. Also it amazes me the magnitude of how much our beliefs can be changed simply by acting a certain way. You can get ordinary people to believe that they are real guards and inmates in a fake prison. Throughout my life I have noticed many things of which I have conformed to. I wear clothes, go to college, follow federal and state laws, and act accordingly in certain social situations. In fact people seem do to surprising things in order to conform. For example some people come across as very strict, sometimes so strict that they seem to lack common sense and only want to go by “the rule book”.

People have been changing all the time. Each generation that passes, people’s views, believes, attitudes, cultures etc. seem to change slowly but drastically. I find more and more people are becoming accepting of same sex marriage, and other ethnicities/cultures.

People themselves can also change drastically too. An individual can feel love towards a group one day and then hate on another day. It seems that stereotypes, ignorance, and categorizations tend to lead us into thinking that we are better or superior to something else, when this is clearly not true. Slowly changing views about others is what leads to tragic events like 9/11 or World War II. Because people think this way, psychologists know that the way to stop these events, is to change the ways that people think. Hate is learned, so it can therefore be stopped. It’s interesting that simply by putting two conflicting groups in close proximity to one another (or in constant contact), they slowly begin to accept one another for their differences. Recognizing and knowing how to stop hating behavior are the first steps to a more open and accepting world.

Memory and Cognition (Mod 21-24)

Memory is one of the abilities that I am amazed at in not just humans but in animals as well. It seems that humans, if learned correctly, can remember just about any piece of information you give them. And years later without a moment’s notice he/she could recall that piece of information fairly quickly with decent accuracy. Of course this is assuming that the piece of information was encoded correctly, and there was no interference. It’s interesting that memory is used all throughout the day, and also the night. It is very interesting that our brain makes, strengthens, and rebuilds connections throughout the night in order to fully encode and learn something. I also find it interesting that memory can be played with. We can think that we recognize something that we have seen before, and that that “something” is exactly what we saw in the past. But really it may just be an object/person that is similar to them, and not the exact one. This shows us that memory, just like everything else, is not perfect. Is has its flaws.

The concept of a memory having multiple links to that piece of information makes complete sense in hindsight. If you learn something in many different ways i.e. visually, kinesthetically, orally, etc. then it will take longer for you to forget that piece of information because there are more links to break then if you just learned that piece of information one way.

I honestly never knew that we learn things on different levels. Like breathing is a subconscious action that we instinctively know how to do, and if we were to try to think about how we are to breath then it becomes awkward. Our breathing pattern changes and the only way to stop it is to think about something else. It also works the opposite way as well, if something is learned consciously, it’s nearly impossible to do it unconsciously. In addition it is interesting that we are able to recall information better if we are put in the place that has learned it. The same can happen with our moods, if we are happy and learn something, we better remember it when we are happy, and vice versa. Memory is something that will continue to impress me, I can only imagine how much memory an individual can hold.