Introduction to Psychology

Social Psychology

Social Psychology

Social Psychology: examines how people impact or affect each other, with particular focus on the power of the situation

Dispositionism vs. Situationism

Dispositionism

Asserts that behavior is determined by internal factors, such as personality traits and temperament

Promoted by personality psychologists

Situationism

Perspective that behavior and actions are determined by the immediate environment and surroundings

Promoted by social psychologists

Fundamental Attribution Error

- Tendency to overemphasize internal factors as attributions for behavior and underestimate the power of the situations when evaluationg others' behaviors

Self-Serving Bias

- Tendency for individuals to take credit by making dispositional or internal attributions for positive outcomes and situational or external attributions for negative outcomes

- Protects self-esteem
- We emphasize internal, stable, and controllable explanations for our success

Norms, Roles, and Scripts

- **Social norm**: group expectations regarding what is appropriate for the thoughts and behavior of its members

Example: Stanford Prisoner Experiment

Stanford University conducted an experiment in a mock prison that demonstrated the power of social roles, social norms, and scripts
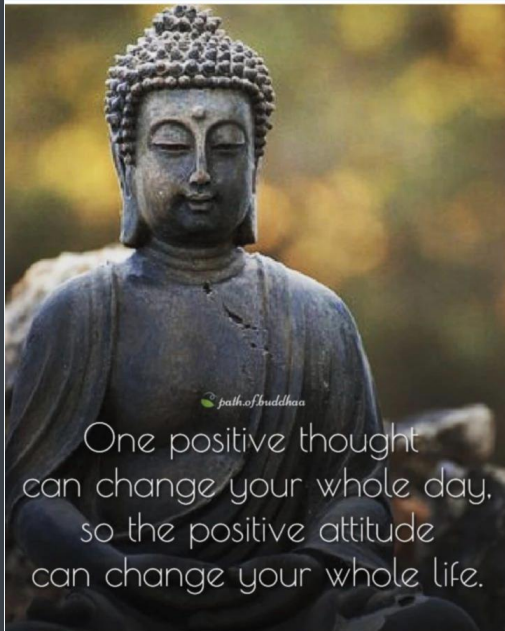
- 24 healthy college students with no psychiatric problems were randomly assigned to be prisoners or guards
- Guards became authoritarian and sadistic
- Prisoners became subservient, anxious, and hopeless

Attitude and Cognitive Dissonance

- **Attitude**: evaluations of or feelings toward a person, idea, or object that are typically positive or negative

In social psychology, attitudes are defined as learned, global evaluations of a person,

object, place, or issue that influence thought and action. Put more simply, attitudes are basic expressions of approval or disapproval, favorability or unfavorability, likes and dislikes

- *Beauty is in the eye of beholder*

One positive thought
can change your whole day,
so the positive attitude
can change your whole life.

Likert scale

• It is a psychometric scale commonly used in questionnaires, and is the most widely used scale in survey research. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents specify their level of agreement to a statement.

Likert Scales

Please circle the number that represents how you feel about the computer software you have been using

I am satisfied with it
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is simple to use
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is fun to use
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It does everything I would expect it to do
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

I don't notice any inconsistencies as I use it
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

It is very user friendly
Strongly Disagree ---1---2---3---4---5---6---7--- Strongly Agree

NATURAL ATTITUDE - basic characteristics

Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938)

IT IS A BELIEF, i.e. a kind of EXPERIENCE! NN is a characteristic of our everyday experience - a sort of belief or underlying mechanism.

We believe that ... "out there" lies an independent world

...it is presented to me as it actually is

...no effort is needed for the world to present itself

(my awareness is an open window, I don't have to do anything in order to "see" the world – it is given to me as it is

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGQmdoK_ZfY

In **phenomenology** and **social psychology**, the **natural attitude** refers to the everyday, taken-for-granted way that people perceive and interact with the world. It is the default state of consciousness in which:

**Key Characteristics of the Natural Attitude:**

The world is assumed to exist as it appears – We accept objects, people, and situations as real and meaningful without questioning how we know them.

We act without reflecting on our assumptions – We engage in daily life (working, communicating, planning) without questioning the basis of our thoughts or perceptions.

Introduction to Micro-Phenomenology

Attitude and Persuasion

Process of changing our attitude toward something based on some form of communication
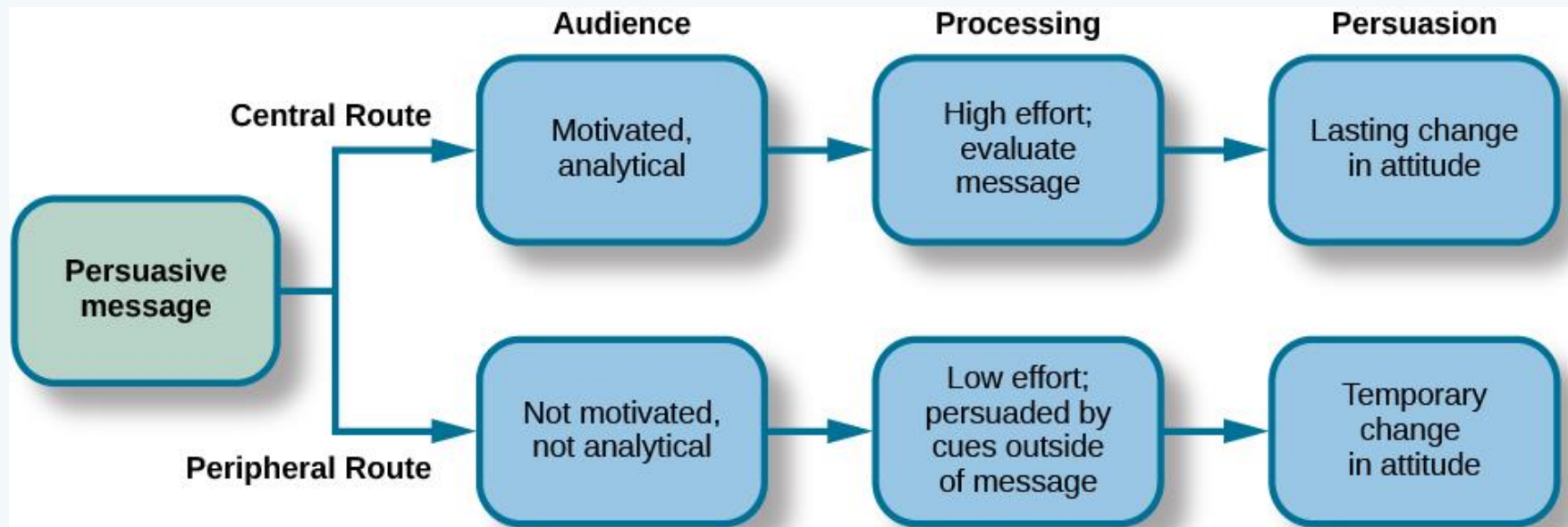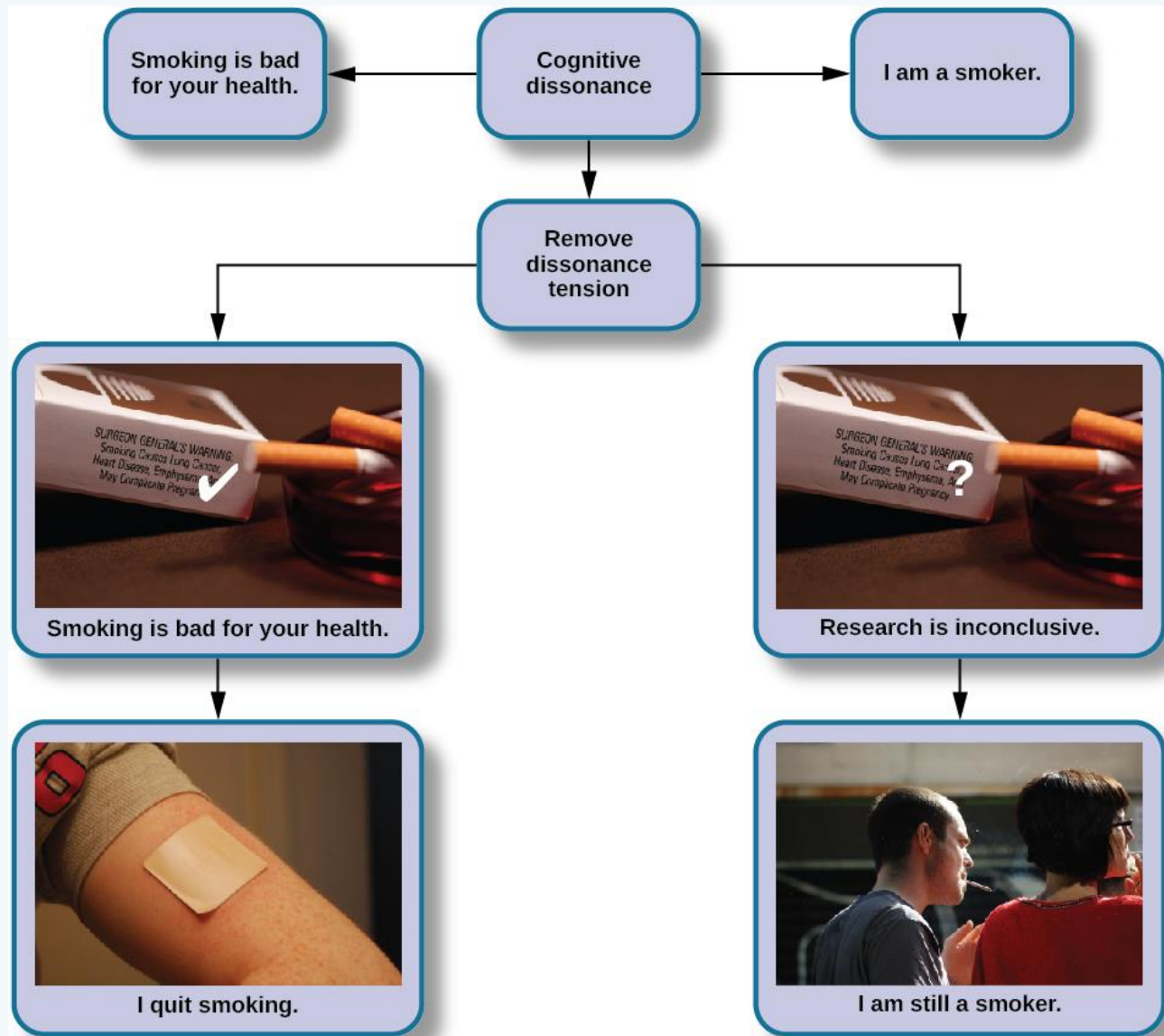
Cognitive Dissonence

- **Cognitive dissonance**: psychological discomfort that arises from a conflict in a person's behaviors, attitudes, or beliefs that runs counter to one's positive self-perception

The theory of cognitive dissonance proposes that people have a motivational drive to reduce dissonance by changing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, or by justifying or rationalizing their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

How Cognitive Dissonance Works

Smoking is bad for your health. ← Cognitive dissonance → I am a smoker.

Cognitive dissonance → Remove dissonance tension

Smoking is bad for your health. → I quit smoking.

Research is inconclusive. → I am still a smoker.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

Types of Social Influence

Type of Social Influence	Description
Conformity	Changing your behavior to go along with the group even if you do not agree with the group
Compliance	Going along with a request or demand
Normative social influence	Conformity to a group norm to fit in, feel good, and be accepted by the group
Information al social influence	Conformity to a group norm prompted by the belief that the group is competent and has the correct information
Obedience	Changing your behavior to please an authority figure or to avoid aversive consequences
Groupthink	Group members modify their opinions to match what they believe is the group consensus
Group polarization	Strengthening of the original group attitude after discussing views within a group
Social facilitation	Improved performance when an audience is watching versus when the individual performs the behavior alone
Social loafing	Exertion of less effort by a person working in a group because individual performance cannot be evaluated separately from the group, thus causing performance decline on easy tasks

Social Influence: Conformity and the Asch Effect

Conformity is when individuals change their behavior to go along with the group even if they do not agree with the group
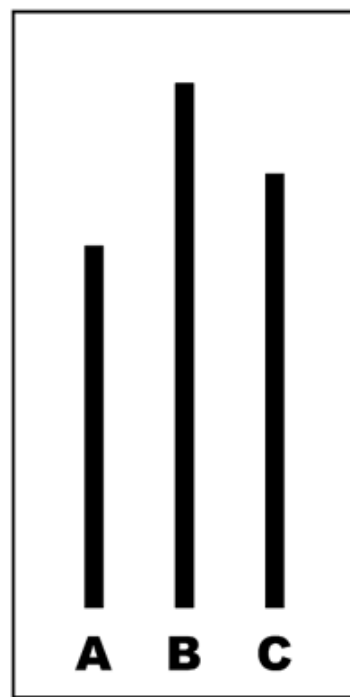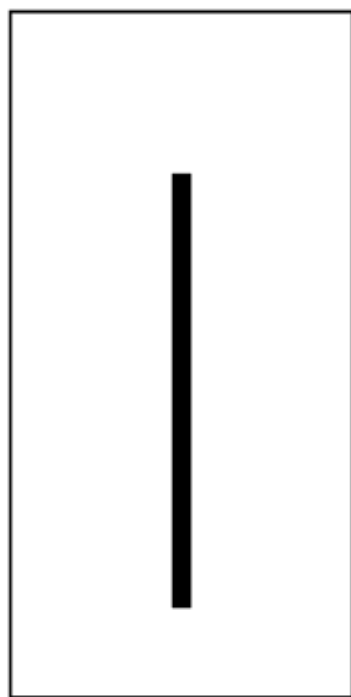
In the Asch effect a group majority influences an individual's judgment, even when that judgment is inaccurate

Factors affect the Asch effect:
- The size of the majority
- The presence of another dissenter
- The public or private nature of the responses

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYIh4MkcfJA

A   B   C

Social Influence: Obedience

Obedience: change of behavior to please an authority figure or to avoid aversive consequences

Stanley Milgram's Experiment:

- Researchers told the participants to give electric shock.
- 65% of the participants continued the shock to the maximum voltage
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kzd6Ew3TraA
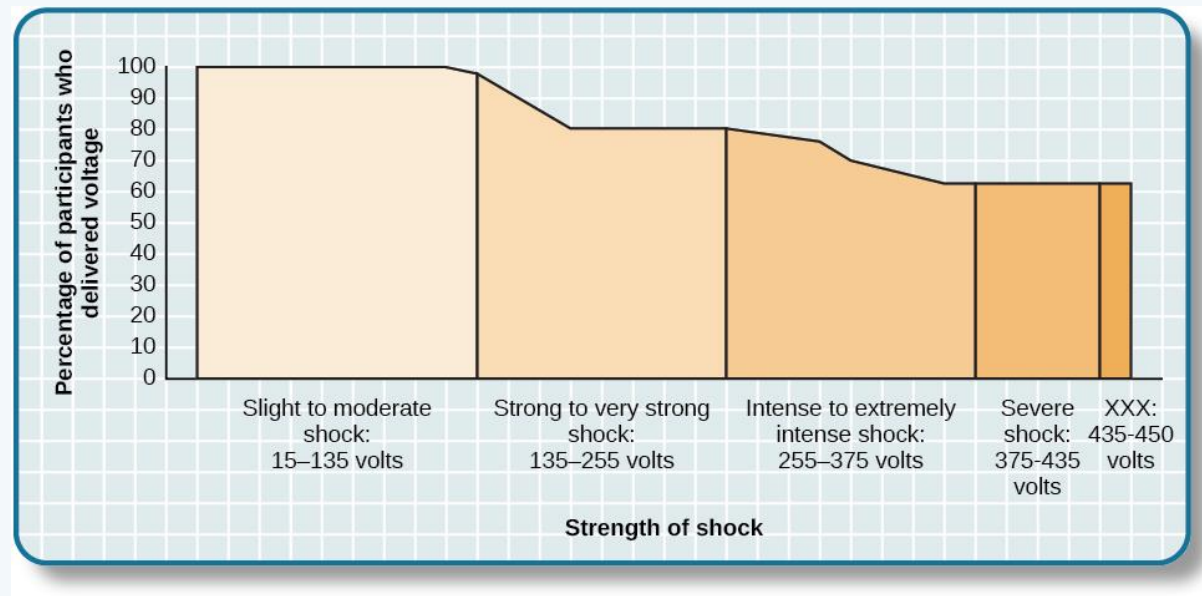
Social Influence: Groupthink

Modification of the opinions of members of a group to align with what they believe is the group consensus. Symptoms include:

- Perceiving the group as invulnerable or invincible
- Believing the group is morally correct
- Self-censorship by group members
- Shielding of the group leader from dissenting views
- Perceiving an illusion of unanimity among group
- Holding stereotypes or negative attitudes toward the out-group or others' with differing viewpoints

Social Influence: Social Facilitation and Loafing

Social facilitation occurs when an individual performs better when an audience is watching than when the individual performs the behavior alone.

Social loafing is the exertion of less effort by a person working together with a group.

Altruism: When do people help others?

Bystander Effect

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSsPfbup0ac

Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Item	Function	Connection	Example
Stereotype	Cognitive; thoughts about people	Overgeneralized beliefs about people may lead to prejudice	"Yankees fans are arrogant and obnoxious"
Prejudice	Affective; feelings about people, both positive and negative	Feelings may influence treatment of others, leading to discrimination	"I hate Yankees fans; they make me angry"
Discrimination	Behavior; positive or negative treatment of others	Holding stereotypes and harboring prejudice may lead to biased treatment	"I would never hire nor become friends with a person if I knew they were a Yankees fan"

Bullying

A person, often an adolescent is treated negatively repeatedly and over time. Involves three parties:

- the bully - experiences power and increased self-esteem
- the victim – has increased risk of anxiety and depression
- witnesses or bystanders

Cyberbullying happens online.