**ATTITUDES**

*“What's your opinion on the death penalty? Which political party does a better job of running the country? Should prayer be allowed in schools? Should violence on television be regulated?”*

an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Attitudes are often the result of experience or upbringing, and they can have a powerful influence over behavior.

Attitudes are learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way. This can include evaluations of people, issues, objects, or events. Such evaluations are often positive or negative, but they can also be uncertain at times. For example, you might have mixed feelings about a particular person or issue.

Researchers also suggest that there are several different components that make up attitudes. The components of attitudes are sometimes referred to as CAB or the ABC's of attitude.

**Cognitive Component:** your thoughts and beliefs about the subject.

**Affective Component:** how the object, person, issue, or event makes you feel.

**Behavioral Component:** how the attitude influences your behavior.

Attitudes can also be explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes are those that we are consciously aware of and that clearly influence our behaviors and beliefs. Implicit attitudes are unconscious but still have an effect on our beliefs and behaviors.

**Attitude Formation**

There are a number of factors that can influence how and why attitudes form.

**Experience**

Attitudes form directly as a result of experience. They may emerge due to direct personal experience, or they may result from observation.

**Social Factors**

Social roles and social norms can have a strong influence on attitudes. Social roles relate to how people are expected to behave in a particular role or context. Social norms involve society's rules for what behaviors are considered appropriate.

**Learning**

Attitudes can be learned in a variety of ways. Consider how advertisers use classical conditioning to influence your attitude toward a particular product. In a television commercial, you see young, beautiful people having fun on a tropical beach while enjoying a sports drink. This attractive and appealing imagery causes you to develop a positive association with this particular beverage.

Operant conditioning can also be used to influence how attitudes develop. Imagine a young man who has just started smoking. Whenever he lights up a cigarette, people complain, rebuke him, and ask him to leave their vicinity. This negative feedback from those around him eventually causes him to develop an unfavorable opinion of smoking and he decides to give up the habit.

Finally, people also learn attitudes by observing the people around them. When someone you admire greatly espouses a particular attitude, you are more likely to develop the same beliefs. For example, children spend a great deal of time observing the attitudes of their parents and usually begin to demonstrate similar outlooks.

Social psychologists have found that attitudes and actual behavior are not always perfectly aligned. After all, plenty of people support a particular candidate or political party and yet fail to go out and vote.

**Effects of Negative attitude**

1. Self-Defeating Talk

Self-defeating talk are messages we send to ourselves which reduce our confidence, diminish our performance, lower our potential, and ultimately sabotage our success. Common self-defeating talk includes sentence beginnings such as: “I can’t…” “I’m not good enough…” “I’m not confident …” “I don’t have what it takes…” “I’m going to fail…”

1. Negative Assumptions

A prevailing form of negative thinking is to take stock of a situation or an interaction, and presume the negative. For many people, this “looking at the glass half empty” attitude is habitual and automatic. One might look at a crowded commute, a rainy day, or paying the bills as automatic negative experiences.

1. Negative Comparison with Others

One of the easiest and most common ways to feel bad about oneself is to compare yourself unfavorably to others. We may be tempted to compare ourselves with those who have more accomplishments, seem more attractive, make more money, or boast more Facebook friends.

1. Negative Reflection about the Past

We should learn from the past, but not be stuck in it. Sometimes life circumstances and personal setbacks can haunt and prevent us from seeing our true potential and recognizing new opportunities. What has already happened we cannot change, but what is yet to happen we can shape and influence.

1. Disempowering Beliefs about Difficult People

Most of us encounter difficult people in our lives. In the face of such challenging individuals, it’s tempting to believe that they are the wrongdoers and we are the victims, or that they hold the power with their challenging behavior. Such attitudes, even if justified, are reactive and thus self-weakening.

1. The Desire to Blame

Blame can be defined as holding others responsible for our misfortunes. Some people cast their dysfunctional parents, negative relationships, socio-economic disadvantages, health challenges, or other life hardships as the reason for their unhappiness and lack of success.

1. The Struggle to Forgive Yourself

All of us make mistakes in life. When you look back at your past deeds, perhaps there were decisions and actions you regret.

There may have been unfortunate errors in judgment. You may have caused harm to yourself and/or others.

During these moments, it’s extremely important to be compassionate with yourself, knowing that now that you’re more aware, you have a chance to avoid repeating past mistakes, and to make a positive difference with yourself and others.

1. The Fear of Failure and Making Mistakes

The fear of failure and making mistakes are often associated with perfectionism (at least in certain areas of your life). You may think that you’re not good enough in some ways, thereby placing tremendous pressure on yourself to succeed.