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Evaluating Evidence:  
Becoming a Smart Research Consumer

#### 8. Real vs. Illusory Relationships

Reminder: Turn on your I<CLICKER

#### Illusions of control: Langer (1975)

- People who selected their lottery ticket wanted four times as much for it as people who had someone else select it for them.
- Why?
- **Because often choice means control, we assume that choice always gives us control, even when the outcomes are determined entirely by chance.**



#### Illusions of control: Langer (1975)

- Those playing "war" (high card wins) will bet more against an unconfident player than a confident player.
- Why?
- **Because cues that an opponent is unconfident (bluffable; unskilled) sometimes means we have a better chance of winning, we assume that this is always so, even when the outcomes are determined entirely by chance.**



#### Illusions of control: Langer (1975)

- People wanting a higher number will roll a die harder than those wanting a low number.
- Why?
- **We seem to believe because sometimes personal effort/skill can often affect outcomes, they generally do, even for outcomes determined completely by chance.**



## Trouble reasoning with probabilities: The Conjunction Fallacy

Linda is 31 years old, single, outspoken, and very bright. She majored in philosophy. As a student, she was deeply concerned with issues of discrimination and social justice, and also participated in anti-nuclear demonstrations.

What is Linda doing now?

- A. Linda is a bank teller.
- B. Linda is an elementary school teacher.
- C. Linda is a bank teller and is active in the feminist movement.
- D. Linda is an insurance salesperson.

**85% say bank teller and feminist is more likely than just bank teller.**

## Applications of Belief in a Just World

- Court cases: victims who are portrayed as good people **awarded greater amounts of money**
- Rape victims are **accused of provoking their perpetrators**
- An attractive woman's accidental death is viewed as more tragic and unfair than an unattractive woman's

## Motivated misperception of probabilities and chance: Belief in a Just World

- Zuckerman (1975): Before exams students who believed more in a **just world** (but not those who didn't)
  - (a) volunteered more to serve as Ps in experiments,
  - (b) were more willing to serve as readers for a blind student, and
  - (c) agreed more to participate in a 1-hr study after having already completed an experiment requirement in an introductory psychology course.but not after the exam was over
- **Why?**
  - if I'm in need (before the exam), and believe in the just world, if I do something good, then good things (e.g., get good grade on exam) should happen to me, but
  - if I'm not in need (after exam is over and nothing more can be done), there's no reason to put myself out