

## **Prejudice: A Way of Feeling**

When you view a group of people who are different as somehow deficient, that means you are pre-judging individuals before getting to know them. Prejudice, therefore, means judging a whole category of people as basically better-than or worse-than others. Because individuals within a group have many similarities but also many differences, pre-judging them is obviously unfair to the individuals. Prejudice is a way of feeling because it arises from some of our deepest fear-based emotions and triggers still other problem emotions.

Some prejudice is a matter of blind conformity to prevailing cultural beliefs and customs. However, in most cases prejudice seems to fulfill a specific irrational function for people, such as making them feel superior to others or using others as scapegoats for the prejudiced persons' own resentment or guilt. Prejudice usually is tied to a person's deepest fears, although the connection is normally subconscious and therefore hidden from awareness, according to Harvard psychologist G.W. Allport in his classic work on prejudice (1954).