

# IMPORTANCE OF SELF DETERMINATION IN HUMAN LIFE

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PALASH SHARMA, KSHITIJ SINHA, DEVANSHU RANJAN, PANKAJ PATIDAR, VISHAL YADAV  
IIIT BHOPAL

[Email ID-mr.palash10@hotmail.com](mailto:mr.palash10@hotmail.com)

[-ksinha5nov@gmail.com](mailto:ksinha5nov@gmail.com)

[-devanshu19990928@gmail.com](mailto:devanshu19990928@gmail.com)

[-pankaj91099@gmail.com](mailto:pankaj91099@gmail.com)

[-vishalyadav3170@gmail.com](mailto:vishalyadav3170@gmail.com)

## **Abstract-**

**Self-determination theory (SDT)** is a macro theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. It is concerned with the motivation behind choices people make without external influence and interference. SDT focuses on the degree to which an individual's behavior is self-motivated and self-determined.

## **Introduction**

SDT is centered on the belief that human nature shows persistent positive features, that it repeatedly shows effort, agency and commitment in their lives that the theory calls "inherent growth tendencies". People also have innate psychological needs that are the basis for self-motivation and personality integration.

SDT identifies three innate needs that, if satisfied, allow optimal function and growth:

1. **Competence**
2. **Relatedness**
3. **Autonomy**

These needs are seen as universal necessities that are innate, not learned (instinctive), and seen in humanity across time, gender and culture.

Deci and Ryan claim that there are three essential elements of the theory:

1. Humans are inherently proactive with their potential and mastering their inner forces (such as drives and emotions)
2. Humans have an inherent tendency toward growth development and integrated functioning
3. Optimal development and actions are inherent in humans but they don't happen automatically

To actualise their inherent potential they need nurturing from the social environment. If this happens there are positive consequences (e.g. well being and growth) but if not, there are negative consequences. So SDT emphasises humans' natural growth toward positive motivation; however, this is thwarted if their basic needs are not fulfilled.

### **Needs**

SDT supports three basic psychological needs that must be satisfied to foster well-being and health. These needs can be universally applied. However, some may be more salient than others at certain times and are expressed differently based on time, culture, or experience.

### **Competence**

Seek to control the outcome and experience mastery

### **Relatedness**

Will to interact, be connected to, and experience caring for others

### **Autonomy**

Desire to be causal agents of one's own life and act in harmony with one's integrated self; however, Deci and Vansteenkiste note this does not mean to be independent of others

### **Motivations**

SDT claims to give a different approach to motivation, considering what motivates a person at any given time as opposed to seeing motivation as a unitary concept. SDT makes distinctions between different types of motivation and the consequences of them.

### **Intrinsic motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is the natural, inherent drive to seek out challenges and new possibilities that SDT associates with cognitive and social development.

Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) is a sub-theory of SDT that specifies factors explaining intrinsic motivation and variability with it and looks at how social and environmental factors help or hinder intrinsic motivations. CET focuses on the needs of competence and autonomy. CET is offered as an explanation of the phenomenon known as motivational "crowding out".

Claiming social context events like feedback on work or rewards lead to feelings of competence and so enhance intrinsic motivations. Deci found positive feedback enhanced intrinsic motivations and negative feedback diminished it. Vallerand and Reid went further and found that these effects were being mediated by perceived control.

Autonomy, however, must accompany competence for people to see their behaviours as self determined by intrinsic motivation. For this to happen there must be immediate contextual support for both needs or inner resources based on prior development support for both needs.

CET and intrinsic motivation is also linked to relatedness through the hypothesis that intrinsic motivation flourishes if linked with a sense of security and relatedness. Grolnick and Ryan found lower intrinsic motivation in children who believed their teachers to be uncaring or cold and so not fulfilling their relatedness needs.

### **Extrinsic motivation**

Extrinsic motivation comes from external sources. Deci and Ryan developed organismic integration theory (OIT), as a sub-theory of SDT, to explain the different ways extrinsically motivated behaviour is regulated.

OIT details the different forms of extrinsic motivation and the contexts in which they come about. It is the context of such motivation that concerns the SDT theory as these contexts affect whether the motivations are internalised and so integrated into the sense of self.

OIT describes four different types of extrinsic motivations that often vary in terms of their relative autonomy:

1. **Externally regulated behaviour:** Is the least autonomous, it is performed because of external demand or possible reward. Such actions can be seen to have an externally perceived loss of causality.
- 2.
3. **Introjected regulation of behaviour:** describes taking on regulations to behaviour but not fully accepting said regulations as your own. Deci and Ryan<sup>1</sup> claim such behaviour normally represents regulation by contingent self-esteem, citing ego involvement as a classic form of introjections. This is the kind of behaviour where people feel motivated to demonstrate ability to maintain self-worth. While this is internally driven, introjected behavior has an external perceived locus of causality or not coming from one's self. Since the causality of the behavior is perceived as external, the behavior is considered non-self-determined.
4. **Regulation through identification:** a more autonomously driven form of extrinsic motivation. It involves consciously valuing a goal or regulation so that said action is accepted as personally important.
5. **Integrated Regulation:** Is the most autonomous kind of extrinsic motivation. Occurring when regulations are fully assimilated with self so they are included in a person's self evaluations and beliefs on personal needs. Because of this, integrated motivations share qualities with intrinsic motivation but are still classified as extrinsic because the goals that are trying to be achieved are for reasons extrinsic to the self, rather than the inherent enjoyment or interest in the task.

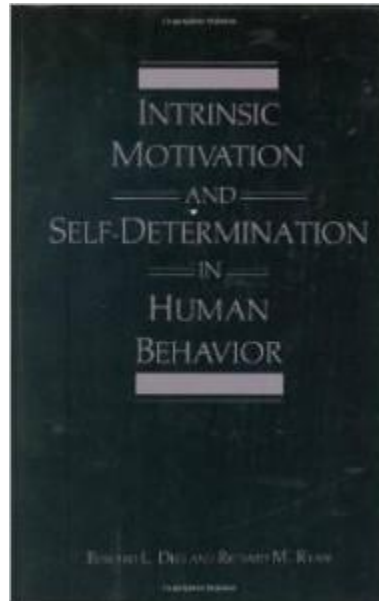
Extrinsically motivated behaviours can be integrated into self. OIT proposes internalization is more likely to occur when there is a sense of relatedness.

Ryan, Stiller and Lynch found that children internalize school's extrinsic regulations when they feel secure and cared for by parents and teachers.

Internalisation of extrinsic motivation is also linked to competence. OIT suggests that feelings of competence in activities should facilitate internalisation of said actions.

Autonomy is particularly important when trying to integrate its regulations into a person's sense of self. If an external context allows a person to integrate regulation—they must feel competent, related and autonomous. They must also understand the regulation in terms of their other goals to facilitate a sense of autonomy. This was supported by Deci, Eghrari, Patrick and Leone who found in laboratory settings if a person was given a meaningful reason for uninteresting behaviour along with support for their sense of autonomy and relatedness they internalized and integrated their behaviour.

## **Literature aspect**



This book, co-authored by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in 1985, remains the preeminent and most comprehensive publication on Self-Determination Theory.

Early in this century, most empirically oriented psychologists believed that all motivation was based in the physiology of a set of non-nervous system tissue needs. The theories of that era reflected this belief and used it in an attempt to explain an increasing number of phenomena. It was not until the 1950s that it became irrefutably clear that much of human motivation is based not in these drives, but rather in a set of innate psychological needs. Their physiological basis is less understood; and as concepts, these needs lend themselves more easily to psychological than to physiological theorizing. The convergence of evidence from a variety of scholarly efforts suggests that there are three such needs: self-determination, competence, and interpersonal relatedness. This book is primarily about self-determination and competence (with particular emphasis on the former), and about the processes and structures that relate to these needs. The need for interpersonal relatedness, while no less important, remains to be explored, and the findings from those explorations will need to be integrated with the present theory to develop a broad, organismic theory of human motivation. Thus far, we have articulated self-determination theory, which is offered as a working theory—a theory in the making. To stimulate the research that will allow it to evolve further, we have stated self-

determination theory in the form of minitheories that relate to more circumscribed domains, and we have developed paradigms for testing predictions from the various minitheories.

## **Survey**

### EXPERIMENT 1 -

A survey was conducted in this study and response of the people were recorded .This survey was done through google form(<https://forms.gle/myG9k3CXM6xUyeS29>) . In this survey we asked people 4 question which are as follows-

Q1 -What do you understand by self determination ?

Q2 -Has self determination helped you in your conquest with daily life ?(YES/NO)

Q3-How important do you think self determination/motivation is for you?

Q4-How self determined are you ?(rate from 1-5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest)

This form was circulated between college students of various years.

### EXPERIMENT 2 -

Self determination among specially abled students and its comparison with regular students

A survey was conducted for some specially abled students was interviewed and were asked question regarding self determination.

They were asked question regarding day to day challenges they face and how self determination helped them to overcome such challenges with more positivity.(No sentiments were harmed during the interview).

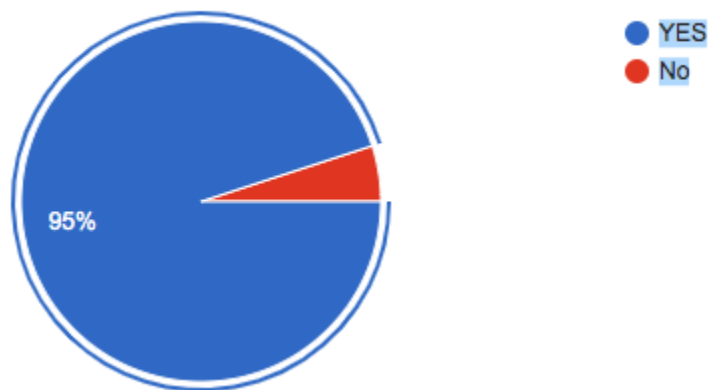
## **Result**

### EXPERIMENT 1 –

We received 41 responses from the survey which are as follows:

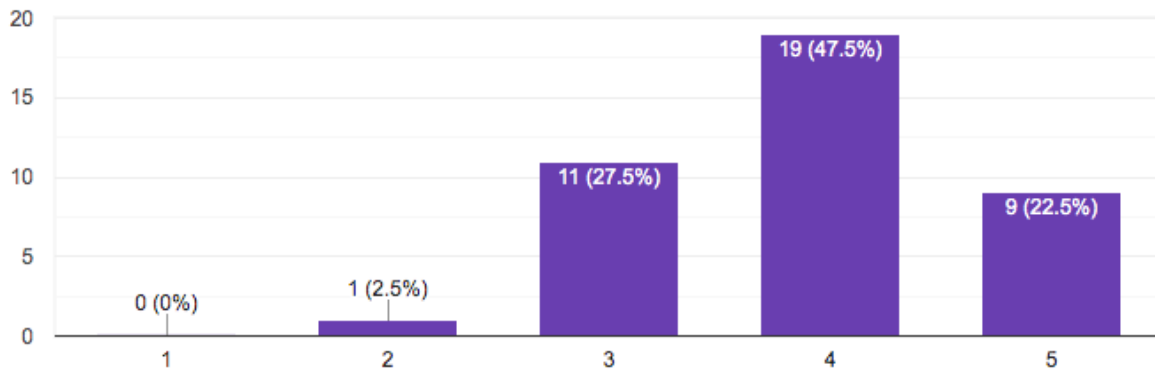
A1-Most of them defined self determination as the inner motivation.

A2-



A3-Large number of people answered that self determination is very important in their life.

A4-



## EXPERIMENT 2-

We recorded the responses of the subject students. They had many experiences to share where they were helped by their self-determination and overcame many obstacles which were difficult to them due to their disabilities. In regard of their journey of life they gave a big credit to intrinsic motivation for their success in various fields. Comparing with the normal students ,the specially abled students were more positive towards life and showed more inclination towards achieving their goals.

## **Conclusion-**

After examining the results of the survey we can conclude the various points:

1. Self-determination is the key for success .For succeeding in any goal it plays an important role.
2. People who are self-determined advocate for themselves and others. For people with disabilities, being a self-advocate is very important to ensure equal access and to battle discrimination.
3. Wellness and positive health outcomes for people with disabilities are important to living a better quality life. Self-determined people make choices about their behaviors and actions to care for their health and lead healthy lifestyles.
4. Self-determination means making things happen in your own life instead of others doing things for you. But perhaps the most important supports a person can have to live a self-determined life are friends and family members! Everybody gets by with a little help from their friends. Whether doing something with friends or with oneself, knowing what you like to do and getting out and doing it are important parts of a better life.



5. Research shows that people who are more self-determined have higher rates of employment and earn more money, as well as having better benefits. Hearing from people with disabilities about their jobs is one way to visualize self-determination in action in the world of work.

### **Psychological effect-**

In psychology, self-determination is an important concept that refers to each person's ability to make choices and exert control over their own life. This ability plays an important role in psychological health and well-being. Self-determination allows people to feel that they have control over their choices and lives.

Self-determination theory suggests that people are motivated to grow and change by innate psychological needs. The theory identifies three key psychological needs that are believed to be both innate and universal:

The need for competence

The need for connectedness

The need for autonomy

The concept of intrinsic motivation, or engaging in activities for the inherent rewards of the behavior itself, plays an important role in self-determination theory.

Note that these needs are all psychological, not physical; hunger and sex, for example, are not on the list. They are also about personal growth or development, not about deficits that a person tries to reduce or eliminate. Unlike food (in behaviorism) or safety (in Maslow's hierarchy), you can never get enough of autonomy, competence, or relatedness. You (and your students) will seek to enhance these continually throughout life.

The key idea of self-determination theory is that when persons (such as you or one of your students) feel that these basic needs are reasonably well met, they tend to perceive their actions and choices to be intrinsically motivated or "self-determined." In that case they can turn their attention to a variety of activities that they find attractive or important, but that do not relate directly to their basic needs. Among your students, for example, some individuals might read books that you have suggested, and others might listen attentively when you explain key concepts from the unit that you happen to be

teaching. If one or more basic needs are not met well, however, people will tend to feel coerced by outside pressures or external incentives. They may become preoccupied, in fact, with satisfying whatever need has not been met and thus exclude or avoid activities that might otherwise be interesting, educational, or important. If the persons are students, their learning will suffer.

#### Self-Determination Theory: A Closer Look

people tend to be driven by a need to grow and gain fulfillment. The first assumption of self-determination theory is that people are actively directed toward growth. Gaining mastery over challenges and taking in new experiences are essential for developing a cohesive sense of self.

While people are often motivated to act by external rewards such as money, prizes, and acclaim (known as extrinsic motivation), self-determination theory focuses primarily on internal sources of motivation such as a need to gain knowledge or independence (known as intrinsic motivation).

According to self-determination theory, people need to feel the following in order to achieve psychological growth:

Competence: People need to gain mastery of tasks and learn different skills.

Connection or Relatedness: People need to experience a sense of belonging and attachment to other people.

Autonomy: People need to feel in control of their own behaviors and goals.

when people experience these three things, they become self-determined. These three elements also enable people to be intrinsically motivated to pursue the things that interest them.

#### How Self-Determination Theory Works

How exactly do people go about fulfilling these three needs?

It is important to realize that the psychological growth described by self-determination theory does not simply happen automatically. While people might be oriented toward such growth, it requires continual sustenance. According to Deci and Ryan, social support is the key. Through our relationships and interactions with others, we can either foster or thwart well-being and personal growth.

What other things that can help or hinder the three elements needed for giving people extrinsic rewards for already intrinsically motivated behavior can undermine autonomy. As the behavior becomes increasingly controlled by the external rewards, people begin to feel less in control of their own behavior and intrinsic motivation is diminished.

offering unexpected positive encouragement and feedback on a person's performance on a task can increase intrinsic motivation. Why? Because such feedback helps people to feel more competent, one of the key needs for personal growth.

- Self-Determined vs Non-Self-Determined Behaviors

While extrinsic and intrinsic motivation are often portrayed as separate and distinct, behavior is complex and people are rarely driven to act by a single source of motivation. People may often draw on multiple sources of motivation in the pursuit of a goal. If you are training to compete in a marathon, for example, you might be extrinsically motivated by a desire to gain approval from others as well as intrinsically motivated by the satisfaction you gain from the activity itself.

### Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Motivation: What's the Difference

Why do we do the things we do? What is it that drives our behaviors? Psychologists have proposed some different ways of thinking about motivation, including one method that involves looking at whether motivation arises from outside (extrinsic) or inside (intrinsic) the individual.

While both types are important, researchers have found that intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation can have different effects on behaviors and how people pursue goals. In order to understand how these types of motivation influence human action, it is important to understand what each one is and how it works.

### What Is Extrinsic Motivation?

Extrinsic motivation occurs when we are motivated to perform a behavior or engage in an activity to earn a reward or avoid punishment. In this case, you engage in a behavior not because you enjoy it or because you find it satisfying, but in order to get something in return or avoid something unpleasant.

### What Is Intrinsic Motivation?

Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in a behavior because it is personally rewarding; essentially, performing an activity for its own sake rather than the desire for some external reward. Essentially, the behavior itself is its own reward.

### Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Motivation: Which Is Best?

The primary difference between the two types of motivation is that extrinsic motivation arises from outside of the individual while intrinsic motivation arises from within.

Researchers have also found that the two type of motivation can differ in how effective they are at driving behavior.

Some studies have demonstrated that offering excessive external rewards for an already internally rewarding behavior can lead to a reduction in intrinsic motivation, a phenomenon known as the overjustification effect.

In one study, for example, children who were rewarded for playing with a toy they had already expressed interest in playing with became less interested in the item after being externally rewarded.

This is not to suggest that extrinsic motivation is a bad thing. Extrinsic motivation can be beneficial in some situations. It can be particularly helpful in situations where a person needs to complete a task that they find unpleasant. However:

External rewards can induce interest and participation in something in which the individual had no initial interest.

Extrinsic rewards can be used to motivate people to acquire new skills or knowledge. Once these early skills have been learned, people may then become more intrinsically motivated to pursue the activity.

External rewards can also be a source of feedback, allowing people to know when their performance has achieved a standard deserving of reinforcement.

Extrinsic motivators should be avoided in situations where:

The individual already finds the activity intrinsically rewarding

Offering a reward might make a "play" activity seem more like "work"

When to Use Extrinsic Motivation

While most people would suggest that intrinsic motivation is best, it is not always possible in every situation.

MORE

In proposing the importance of needs, then, self-determination theory is asserting the importance of intrinsic motivation. The self-determination version of intrinsic motivation, however, emphasizes a person's perception of freedom, rather than the presence or absence of "real" constraints on action. Self-determination means a person feels free, even if the person is also operating within certain external constraints. In principle, a student can experience self-determination even if the student must, for example, live within externally imposed rules of appropriate classroom behavior. To achieve a feeling of self-determination, however, the student's basic needs must be met—needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In motivating students, then, the bottom line is that teachers have an interest in helping students to meet their basic needs, and in

not letting school rules or the teachers' own leadership styles interfere with or block satisfaction of students' basic needs.

"Pure" self-determination may be the ideal for most teachers and students, of course, but the reality is usually different. For a variety of reasons, teachers in most classrooms cannot be expected to meet all students' basic needs at all times. One reason is the sheer number of students, which makes it impossible to attend to every student perfectly at all times. Another reason is teachers' responsibility for a curriculum, which can require creating expectations for students' activities that sometimes conflict with students' autonomy or makes them feel (temporarily) less than fully competent. Still another reason is students' personal histories, ranging from divorce to poverty, which may create needs in some individuals which are beyond the power of teachers to remedy.

The result from students' point of view is usually only a partial perception of self-determination, and therefore a simultaneous mix of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Self-determination theory recognizes this reality by suggesting that the "intrinsic-ness" of motivation is really a matter of degree, extending from highly extrinsic, through various mixtures of intrinsic and extrinsic, to highly intrinsic. At the extrinsic end of the scale is learning that is regulated primarily by external rewards and constraints, whereas at the intrinsic end is learning regulated primarily by learners themselves. Table 1 summarizes and gives examples of the various levels and their effects on motivation. By assuming that motivation is often a mix of the intrinsic and extrinsic, the job of the teacher becomes more realistic; the job is not to expect purely intrinsic motivation from students all the time, but simply to arrange and encourage motivations that are as intrinsic as possible. To do this, the teacher needs to support students' basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

"pertaining to the mind or to mental phenomena as the subject matter of psychology. pertaining to, dealing with, or affecting the mind, especially as a function of awareness, feeling, or motivation: psychological play.

Many studies and much research has been invested into the how and why behind our everyday actions and interactions. The results are revealing. If you are looking for a way to supercharge your personal development, understanding the psychology behind our actions is an essential first step.

Fortunately, knowing is half the battle. When you realize all the many ways in which our minds create perceptions, weigh decisions, and subconsciously operate, you can see the psychological advantages start to take shape. It's like a backstage pass to the way we work, and being backstage, you have an even greater understanding of what it takes to succeed.

The following 6 psychology facts can be viewed as a hacker's guide to self-improvement, based on the brain's default settings.

1. The Pratfall Effect – Your likability will increase if you aren't perfect.
2. The Pygmalion Effect – Greater expectations drive greater performance.
3. The Paradox of Choice – The more choices we have, the less likely we are to be content with our decision.
4. The Bystander Effect – The more people who see someone in need, the less likely that person is to receive help.
5. The Spotlight Effect – Your mistakes are not noticed as much as you think.
6. The Focusing Effect – People place too much importance on one aspect of an event and fail to recognize other factors.

#### 1. The Pratfall Effect

Don't worry about tripping and falling in front of your boyfriend; doing so will only make him like you more. Go ahead and admit your failures to your friends; your humanness will endear yourself to them.

These mistakes attract charm as a result of the Pratfall Effect: Those who never make mistakes are perceived as less likeable than those who commit the occasional faux pas. Messing up draws people closer to you, makes you more human. Perfection creates distance and an unattractive air of invincibility. Those of us with flaws win out every time.

This theory was tested by psychologist Elliot Aronson. In his test, he asked participants to listen to recordings of people answering a quiz. Select recordings included the sound of the person knocking over a cup of coffee. When participants were asked to rate the quizzers on likability, the coffee-spill group came out on top.

#### 2. The Pygmalion Effect

The crux of this psychological phenomenon is the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy: If you believe something is true of yourself, eventually it will be.

The first test of the Pygmalion Effect was performed by psychologist Robert Rosenthal and occurred in an elementary school classroom with first and second grade students. At the beginning of the year, all the students took an assessment test, and Rosenthal led the teachers to believe that certain students were capable of great academic achievement. Rosenthal chose these students at random, regardless of the actual results of the IQ tests.

At the end of the year, when the students were retested, the group of earmarked high achievers did indeed show improvement over their peers. Why was this? Later tests concluded that teachers subconsciously gave greater opportunities, attention, and

feedback to the special group. Their expectations for this group were higher, and their expectations created the reality.

The effect was dubbed "Pygmalion," named after the Ovid tale of a sculptor who falls in love with one of his statues.

### 3. The Paradox of Choice

Have you felt buyer's remorse? If so, you've seen the Paradox of Choice in effect.

Even if our ultimate decision is clearly correct, when faced with many choices, we are less likely to be happy with what we choose. No doubt this is familiar to you. When I eat out, I often second-guess my menu choice. When you buy a new car, you might toss and turn over the decision. A wealth of choices makes finding contentment that much harder.

To prove this paradox, psychologists Mark Lepper and Sheena Iyengar conducted an experiment on supermarket jam. At a gourmet food store, Lepper and Iyengar set up a display of high-quality jams and taste samples. In one test, they offered six varieties; another test, they offered 24. The results of the study showed that 30 percent of people exposed to the smaller selection ended up purchasing a jar of jam. Only 3 percent of the people exposed to the larger selection purchased jam.

The fame of the jam study coupled with a popular book and TED talk by psychologist Barry Schwartz make the paradox of choice one of the most publicized (and criticized) psychological phenomena. Perhaps the best affirmations of this tyranny of choice are its common sense explanations: Happiness is diminished with the extra effort and stress it takes to weigh multiple options, opportunity cost affects the way we value items, pressure to choose can be draining, and the possibility of blame exists should the decision not turn out how we had hoped.

### 4. The Bystander Effect

The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates this effect clearly. So too do many tragic events throughout history. Researchers call it a "confusion of responsibility," where individuals feel less responsibility for the outcome of an event when others are around. In fact, the probability of help is inversely related to the number of people present. If you are to ever need assistance, don't go looking for it in a crowd.

The Bystander Effect was shown in a study by social psychologists Bibb Latane and John Darley. They watched students respond to the perceived choking of a fellow student in a nearby cubicle. When the test subjects felt they were the only other person there, 85 percent rushed to help. When the student felt there was one other person, 65 percent helped. When the student felt there were four other people, the percentage dropped to 31 percent.

You may have experienced the Bystander Effect in a group project at school. There is often one group member who puts off deadlines and assignments because of diffused responsibility: They assume someone else will pick up the slack.

#### 5. The Spotlight Effect

The perception of our being under constant scrutiny is merely in our minds, and the paranoia and self-doubt that we feel each time we make a mistake does not truly reflect reality. According to the Spotlight Effect, people aren't paying attention at our moments of failure nearly as much as we think.

To test the Spotlight Effect, a team of psychologists at Cornell asked a group of test subjects to wear an embarrassing T-shirt (featuring a picture of Barry Manilow's face) and estimate how many other people had noticed what they were wearing. The estimations of the test subjects were twice as high as the actual number.

#### 6. The Focusing Effect

How great is the difference in mood between someone who earns high income and someone who earns lower income? The difference does exist, but it is one-third less significant than most people expect. This illustrates the Focusing Effect; in the income example, the factor of income as it relates to mood overshadows the myriad other circumstances at play.

How much happier is a Californian than a Midwesterner? When psychologists posed this question to residents of both areas, the answer from each group was that Californians must be considerably happier. The truth was that there was no difference between the actual happiness rating of Californians and Midwesterners. Respondents were focusing on the sunny weather in California and the easy-going lifestyle as the predominant factors in happiness when in fact there are many other, less publicized aspects of happiness that Midwesterners enjoy: low crime, safety from earthquakes, etc.

Marketers use Focusing Effect (also called focusing illusion) on consumers by convincing them of the necessary features of a product or service. Politicians, too, use focusing to exaggerate the importance of particular issues.

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