

## Jamie Lee Week 8 Writing Assignment

This week's readings (to me) were not really one cohesive idea but a loose connection between multiple. I guess if I had to really say a common notion between the four, I would say that the readings explored the effects of emotion on other aspects of life, rather than focusing on *emotion* itself.

The Lerner reading regarding emotions and acts of terrorism was something I'd never thought about. Since this paper was written in 2003, the examples and areas of exploration are focused primarily on the 9/11 attacks. I had never really thought of the relationship between anger and fear and the effects that each elicit. I found it very interesting that anger tends to trigger more optimistic risk assessments. I think a very practical direction that we could go for a more modern day application would be analyzing the strategies that Trump employed to elicit certain responses. His general approach was to create anger and vengeance and I am sure there are sociopolitical analyses on his presidency.

Another direction that could have been gone would be to analyze the specifics of fearmongering. The pandemic has brought to light extreme examples of medical misinformation, alternative medicine and fear tactics to sway public opinion (from both ends of the spectrum).

Another very real application I thought while doing the readings was in the Gable reading. They found that high-approach-motivated positive affect decreased global attentional focus relative to low-approach-motivated positive affect. It is funny to read this because there have been a lot of discourse surrounding the effects of short-form content, particularly with TikTok. There have been a lot of people and articles stating that they've been feeling like their attention spans have been dropping due to watching short form content. Several articles cite a study done by Microsoft with findings that state while the average attention span in 2000 was 20 seconds, it is now 8. TikTok would be a great example of high-approach-motivated positive affect, as it works with its algorithm to constantly push content that it knows that you would enjoy. The results of the Gable reading align with this sentiment.

However, the study done by Microsoft has been debunked as it was not studying the effects of social media on working memory and attention span as we are discussing with TikTok, but rather a 2000 person sample experiment done in which people were playing attention games. The idea that attention spans have actually gone down is slightly debunked, as short-form content is not *actually* reducing attention spans but rather content has become infinitely better at grabbing people's attention. So anything in comparison to said short-form content seems much more difficult to focus on.

Something else based on social media that I could think of was the effect of proximity on guilt and decision making. The trolley (switch) problem and the footbridge problem was brought up, and while these are hypothetical problems-for-thought, it can be something to think about when navigating negative comments on social media. The reason negative speech, opinions and "hate comments" are so prevalent and more commonly seen than you hear in real life is due to the lack of proximity. There is a large distance, not only physically, between the person receiving the comment but also conceptually. The username on the screen as well as the profile picture, although they can be someone's real name and face, is still distant from the *whole person*. Increased distance in all aspects change the way people navigate communication and human relationships.

Not really an application but I just wanted to bring up some notes and thoughts I wrote on the readings:

At the end of the Gable reading, the relationship between depressed individuals and creativity was brought up, and I just wrote a couple notes saying that constraints and limitations foster creativity. Another quote that was interesting was that "In the case of low-motivated negative affects such as sadness and depression, a more open, unfocused, unselective, low-effort mode of attention would prove not deficient but, on the contrary, beneficial." and I was wondering what applications this could have in rehabilitation? For both mental health as well as the criminal rehabilitation system.