

Personality
What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 20

Cognitive Approach Wrap Up
Begin Emotions and Personality

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**Advocating Internal Locus:
The appeal of James Frey**

A Million Little Pieces
Book
OPRAH'S
Club
James Frey

“People in here, people everywhere, they all want to take their own problems, usually created by themselves, and try to pass them off on someone or something else. I'm a victim of nothing but myself, just as I believe that most people with this so-called disease aren't victims of anything other than themselves. I call it being responsible. I call it the acceptance of my own problems and my own weaknesses with honor and dignity. I call it getting better.”

James Frey, Granville, Ohio P.D. (1992)

Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

1. A. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
B. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
2. A. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
B. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
3. A. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
B. There really is no such thing as luck.

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Research Findings on Locus of Control

- Internal Locus
 - Increased academic performance
 - More effective health-prevention behaviors
 - Social/political activism

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External Locus: Learned Helplessness

- Originated in research on dogs (Seligman)
 - Exposure to unavoidable shocks
 - Outcome not contingent on behavior (external locus)
 - Helpless dogs get depressed, give up
- “Learned helplessness” = belief that outcomes can’t be controlled
- Humans, too, show learned helplessness

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But, is there a downside to Internal Locus?

- Some things are truly outside our control
 - People who accept this may cope better with death, disease, etc.
 - Survivor guilt
 - Roots of addiction
- Why not externalize *negative* events?
 - “It wasn’t my fault the team didn’t win”

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Beyond Locus: Explanatory Style

- Explanatory Style: The ways in which people habitually explain the causes of negative events
- Locus:
 - Internality (“it’s me”) [SELF-BLAME]
 - Externality (“it’s something in the environment”)
- Stability:
 - Stable (“it’s going to last forever”) [FATALISM]
 - Unstable (“it’s going to go away”)
- Globality:
 - Global (“it’s going to undermine everything”) [CATASTROPHIZING]
 - Specific (“its effects are limited to this one domain”) ₇

Pessimistic Explanatory Style

- Internal, stable, global
 - “I did it, I always do it, and I do it on everything”
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of internal, stable, global causes → more depressed
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of stable and global causes (internal or external) → more health problems
- Solution: internalize, but don’t globalize
 - Internal, unstable, specific attributions
 - It’s my fault, but it’s because I didn’t study hard this time

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Evidence for Importance of Explanatory Style

- Terman Longitudinal Study – participants born in 1910
- In 1936-1940, participants described their responses to bad events, such as:
 - “Have any disappointments exerted a prolonged influence on you?”
- Responses were coded by 8 judges for internality, stability, and globality

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Evidence for Explanatory Style

- Participants in Terman sample followed for decades
- Catastrophizing (attributing bad events to global causes) was associated with increased mortality
 - Especially accidental and violent deaths
- Why?

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Cognitive Therapy

- Recognize that thoughts (beliefs, expectations, explanations, thinking style) affect your feelings and behavior
- Try to change negative schemas
 - Convert to positive schemas or compartmentalize
- Try to change explanatory style
 - I didn't get the job because I didn't prepare well
 - He broke up with me because he didn't want to be in a relationship
- Interpret failure as an opportunity to learn
- “Talk” to self differently before, during, and after stressful situations

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Emotion Approach to Personality

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What is an emotion?

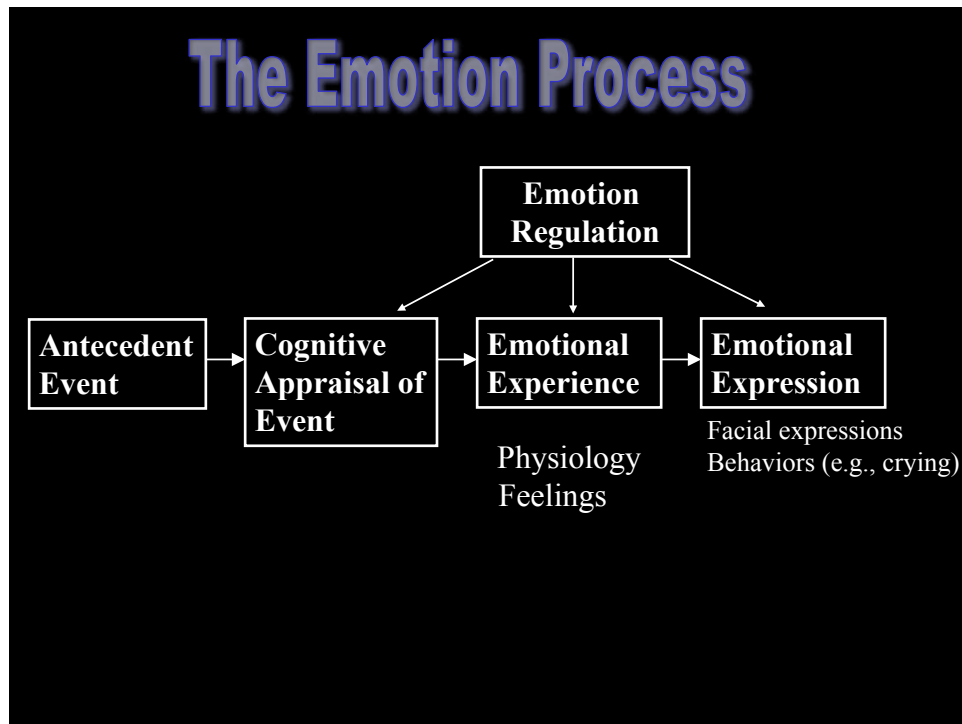
- Discrete, momentary experience in a specific situation
- Traits, or dispositional tendencies to chronically experience certain feelings
 - Mood, temperament, emotional disorder

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What are the Parts of an Emotion?

- Feelings
- Thoughts
- Physiology
- Brain activation
- Nonverbal Expression

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Emotions as Personality Traits

- Stable tendency to experience certain feelings, or have certain emotional reactions



Grumpy, hostile



Happy, hyperactive

Happiness: The Trait



Definitions of Happiness

- **Aristotle**: the goal of life, attained through virtuosity (being “good”)
- **Rousseau**: hedonism (being “bad”)
- **James**: accomplishments
- What do you think?

Modern Research Definition of Happiness

- Cognitive-Affective Approach
 - Judgment of life's satisfaction
 - How satisfied are you with your life?
- AND
 - Tendency to experience positive vs. negative emotions
- Martin Seligman: Authentic happiness is based on living a life filled with purpose and meaning
- Daniel Kahneman: Positive (but not negative) emotions (hedonism)

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Happy Facts

- The average person is...
 - Happy 65% of the time
 - Neutral 15%
 - Unhappy 20%
- Is there a gender difference?
 - No.
- Is there an age difference?
 - No.
- What about country differences?

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Subjective Well-Being Across Countries

Nation	SWB	Nation	SWB
Iceland	1.11	Mexico	-.28
Sweden	1.03	Bangladesh	-.29
Australia	1.02	France	-.38
Denmark	1.00	Spain	-.41
Canada	.97	Portugal	-.41
Switzerland	.94	Italy	-.44
U.S.A.	.91	Hungary	-.48
Colombia	.82	Puerto Rico	-.51
Luxembourg	.82	Thailand	-.62
New Zealand	.82	S. Africa	-.63
N. Ireland	.78	Jordan	-.77
Norway	.77	Egypt	-.78
Finland	.74	Yugoslavia	-.81
Britain	.69	Japan	-.86
Netherlands	.68	Greece	-.89
Ireland	.57	Poland	-.90
Brazil	.57	Kenya	-.92
Tanzania	.51	Turkey	-1.02
Belgium	.51	India	-1.13
Singapore	.43	S. Korea	-1.15
Bahrain	.36	Nigeria	-1.31
W. Germany	.18	Panama	-1.31
Austria	.15	E. Germany	-1.52
Chile	.13	U.S.S.R.	-1.70
Philippines	.10	China	-1.92
Malaysia	.08	Cameroon	-2.04
Cuba	.00	Dom. Repub.	-3.92
Israel	-.18		

Table 2
The Happiness of Selected Nations

Nation	Affect balance (PA - NA), 1981-1984	Life satisfaction, 1999-2001
Canada	2.33	7.85
United States	2.23	7.66
China	1.46	6.53
West Germany	1.45	7.42
Mexico	1.38	8.14
India	0.72	5.14
Turkey	0.62	5.61
Russia	0.33	4.65

Note. Mean scores are taken from the World Value Survey, the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale, where affect balance can vary from 5 to -5, with 0 as the neutral point. The national differences in both positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) in the full sample are highly significant, $p < .001$. Life satisfaction scores, with a range of 1 to 10, were taken from the European Values Study Group and World Values Survey Association (2005) Data Wave 1999-2001.

Next Class

- Exam 4
- Friday March 13 & Monday March 16:
Film- Shattered Glass
 - Read article posted on the website AFTER you watch the film!
- Wednesday March 18: Finish Emotion Perspective
 - Homework: Read Chapter 13 if you haven't already

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