

Personality

What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 4

The Self and Self-Esteem Trait Approach

Class Updates

- **Next week: Thanksgiving Break**
- **Monday Oct. 17th:**
 - 5 pm- 6:20 pm: Midterm 1
 - 6:20- 6:35 pm: Break
 - 6:35- 7:30 pm: Guest Lecture on Trait Taxonomies & Personality Change and Stability

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- ❖ An international academic community of undergrads, grad students, and faculty
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Application deadline:

October 11, 2016 at 12 pm

Membership info session:

October 4, 2016 at 5 pm

West Mall Swing Space #309

For more information:

psichi.psych.ubc.ca

Questions?

psichi@psych.ubc.ca

PRIDE. Its dark, hubristic side is well known.

In her new book, renowned emotion researcher **Jessica Tracy** shows that pride is also essential for helping us become our best, brightest selves.

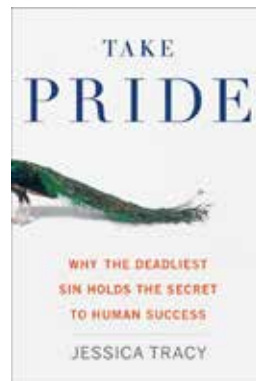


Photo: Cornelia Naylor

Join **JESSICA TRACY** at a book talk and signing event for her new book **TAKE PRIDE**.

Thursday, October 13 | 4:00pm

Lillooet Room (301), Irving K. Barber Learning Centre
UBC Vancouver Campus



“With scientific and personal insight, and with a gift for vividly presenting both technical research and real-life personalities, Jessica Tracy enlightens us about how this emotion permeates our waking lives and shapes our social worlds.”

— Steven Pinker, bestselling author of *How the Mind Works* and *The Blank Slate*

“An insightful and engaging exploration of a noble joy, a deadly sin, and an essential piece of the human experience.”

— Daniel Gilbert, bestselling author of *Stumbling on Happiness*



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Other animals with self

- **Mirror self-recognition**
 - Chimps, orangutans, gorillas
 - But not monkeys
 - Elephants
 - Dolphins
 - Humans
 - Recent discovery: magpies!



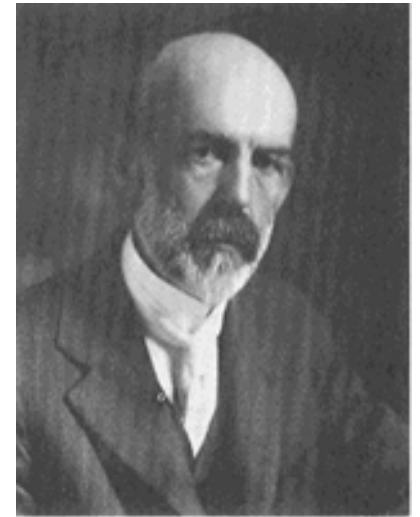
Do Dogs have a sense of self?



How do we know a child has a sense of self?

- **Emotional markers (age 2.5-3)**
 - Self-conscious emotions
 - Shame
 - Guilt
 - Embarrassment
 - Pride
 - Require ability to evaluate the self (“I” self evaluates the “me” self)
 - Empathy

Where does the Self-Concept come from?



Charles Horton Cooley

- “Looking Glass Self”
- Charles Cooley (1864-1929)
 - *“Human Nature and the Social Order”*
- “Each to each a looking glass, reflects the other that doth pass”
 - Self is **socially constructed**
 - Our sense of self is built upon the life-long experience of seeing ourselves through the eyes of others (i.e., through the “looking glass”)

Looking Glass Self: How Many Different Mirrors?

- **During a one week period, the typical university student interacts with 50 different people and has 146 different interactions**
- **Of the 50 different people:**
 - 5% are complete strangers
 - 6% are strangers linked by mutual acquaintance
 - 6% are immediate family members
 - 7% are formal relations (e.g., service workers)
 - 14% are close friends
 - 34% are other friends
 - 28% are casual acquaintances
- **Do we have a different self for each of these interactions?**

Unitary vs. Multiple Selves

- **Multiple selves correspond to multiple roles--we see ourselves differently in each social role**
- **Think about how you see yourself as:**
 - Son/daughter
 - Friend
 - Student
 - Romantic partner
 - Worker
- **Do you have a different self for each relationship?**

Is it Adaptive to Have Multiple Selves?

- **Study:** Compared people who saw themselves similarly across social roles (unitary selves) with those who saw themselves very differently across their social roles (multiple selves)

- **Assessment:**

How do you see yourself in the following roles?

	Daughter/ Son		Relationship		
	Friend	Student	Partner	Worker	
Assertive	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Try to be helpful	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Punctual	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Worry a lot	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Clever, witty	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is it Adaptive to Have Multiple Selves?

- **Findings:**
 - Multiple selves → lower well-being and self-esteem
 - During university years
 - 20 years later during mid-life
 - Low well-being and self-esteem in university → multiple selves 20 years later
 - Frequent relationship and career changes → multiple selves
- **Conclusion: A highly differentiated self-concept reflects psychological fragmentation and lack of an integrated core self**

Self-Esteem

Evaluations of the Self-Concept

Definition of Self-Esteem

- ***Evaluation*** (positive vs. negative) of one's self as a physical, social, psychological, and moral being
 - Affective component
 - Feelings about the self; self-liking
 - Cognitive component
 - Thoughts about one's competencies, abilities

Measuring Self-Esteem

- **Self-report scales**
- **Similarity between actual and ideal self**
- **Observer report**
 - Parent and teacher ratings for kids
 - Can someone else know your self-esteem?
- **Pictorial measures for children**

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

- **Strongly disagree** **Strongly agree**
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
- **I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.**
- **I feel that I have a number of good qualities.**
- **On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.**
- **I am able to do things as well as most other people.**
- **I take a positive attitude toward myself.**
- **All in all, I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure. (R)**
- **I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (R)**
- **I wish I could have more respect for myself. (R)**
- **I certainly feel useless at times. (R)**
- **At times I think I am no good at all. (R)**

Undergraduates' mean self-esteem

- **3.85**
- **Based on 1,643 psych students**

Development of Self-Esteem

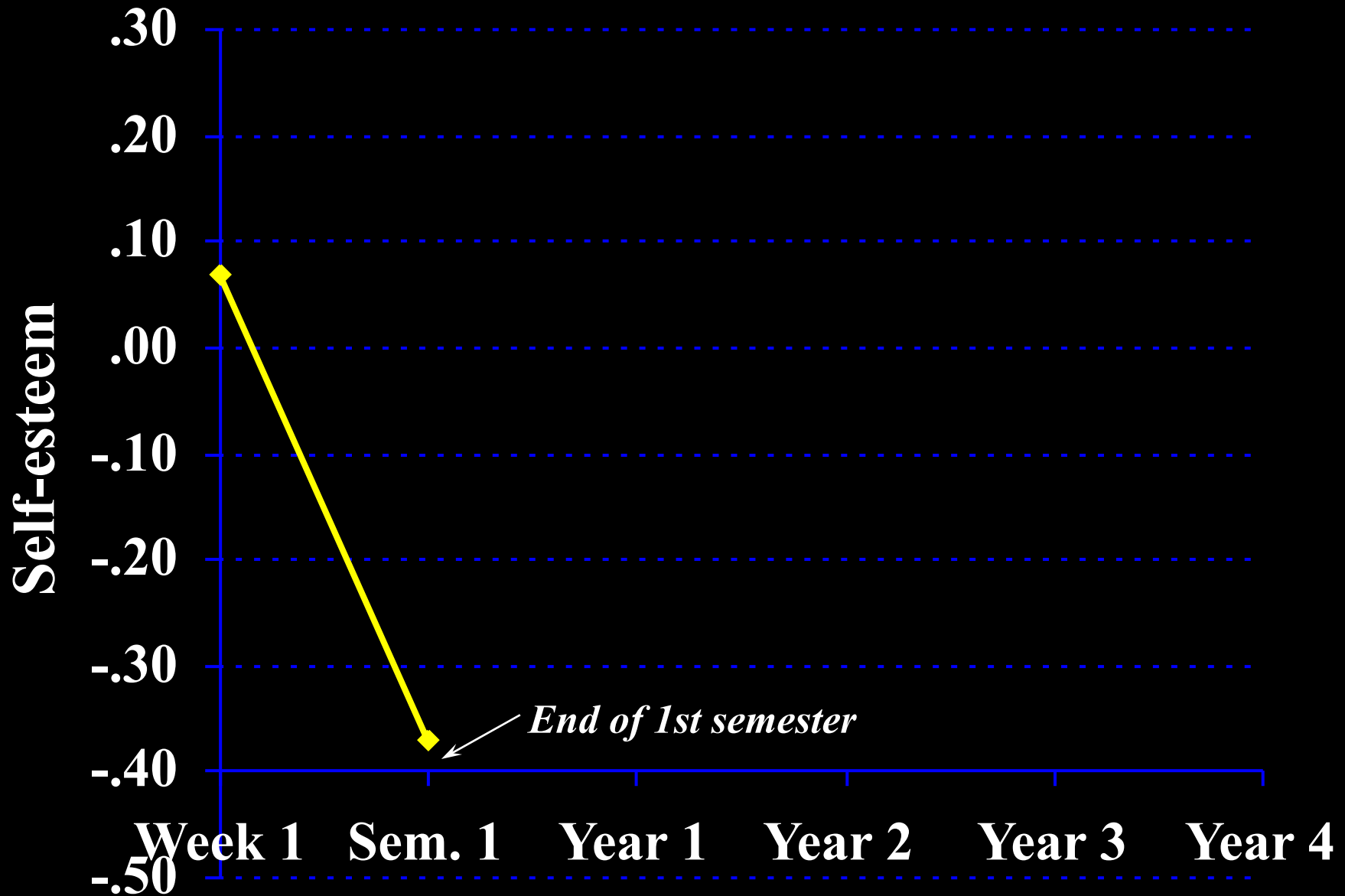
Longitudinal Study

- **Assessed undergrads' self-esteem**
 - Used Rosenberg scale
- (1) Beginning of Year 1**
- (2) End of first semester**
- (3) End of Year 1, Year 2, Year3, Year 4**

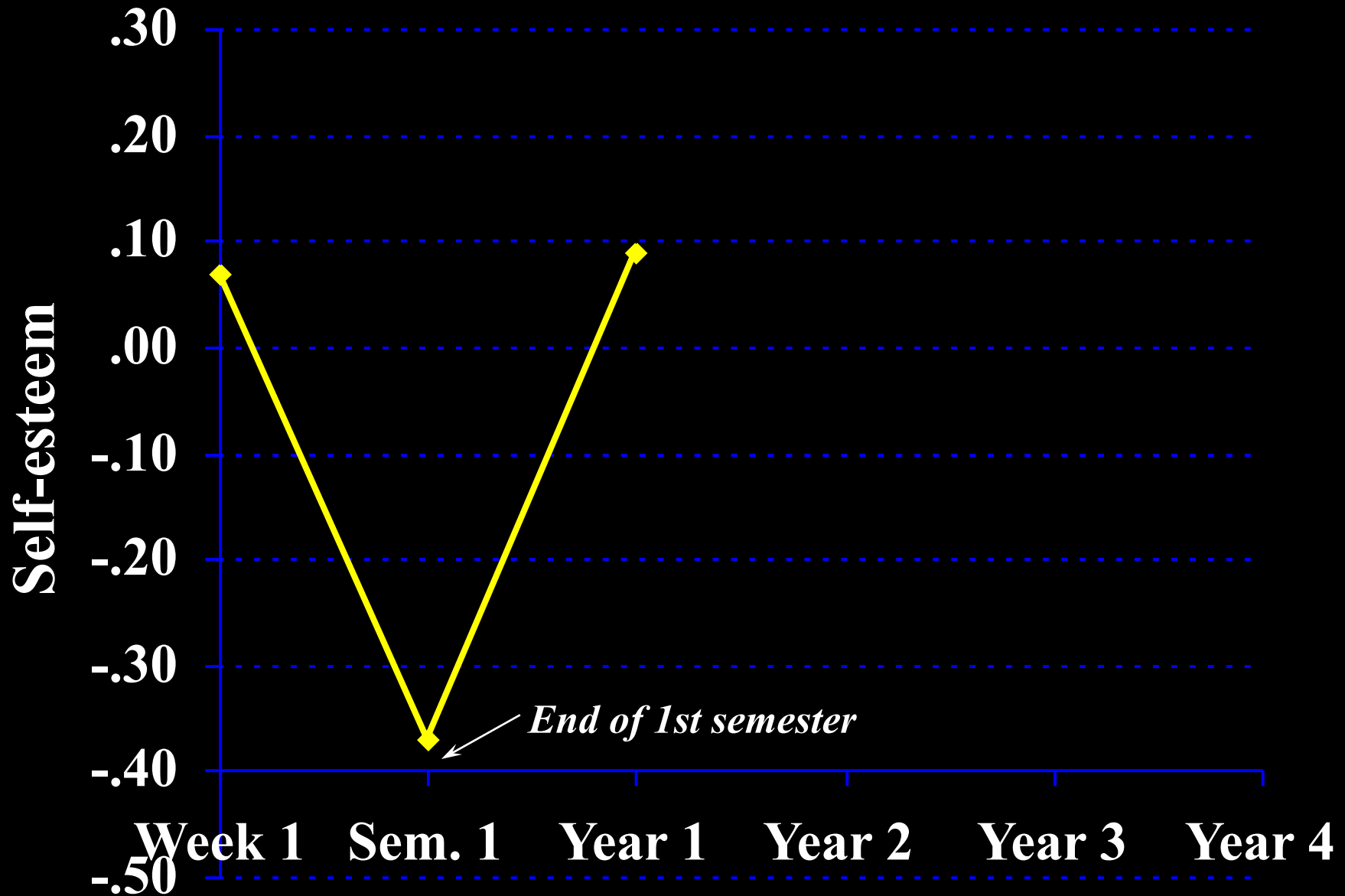
SELF-ESTEEM CHANGE DURING UNIVERSITY



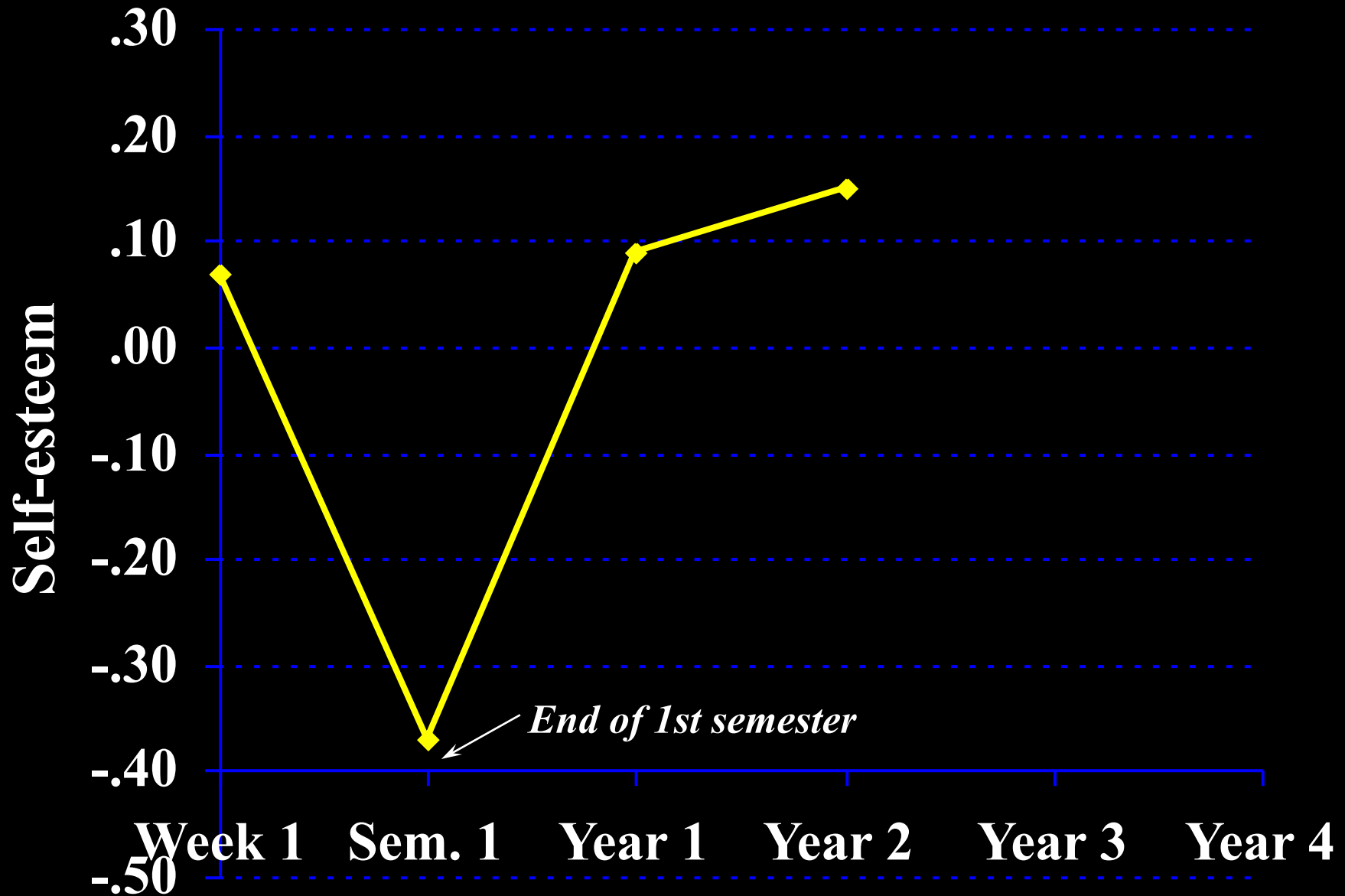
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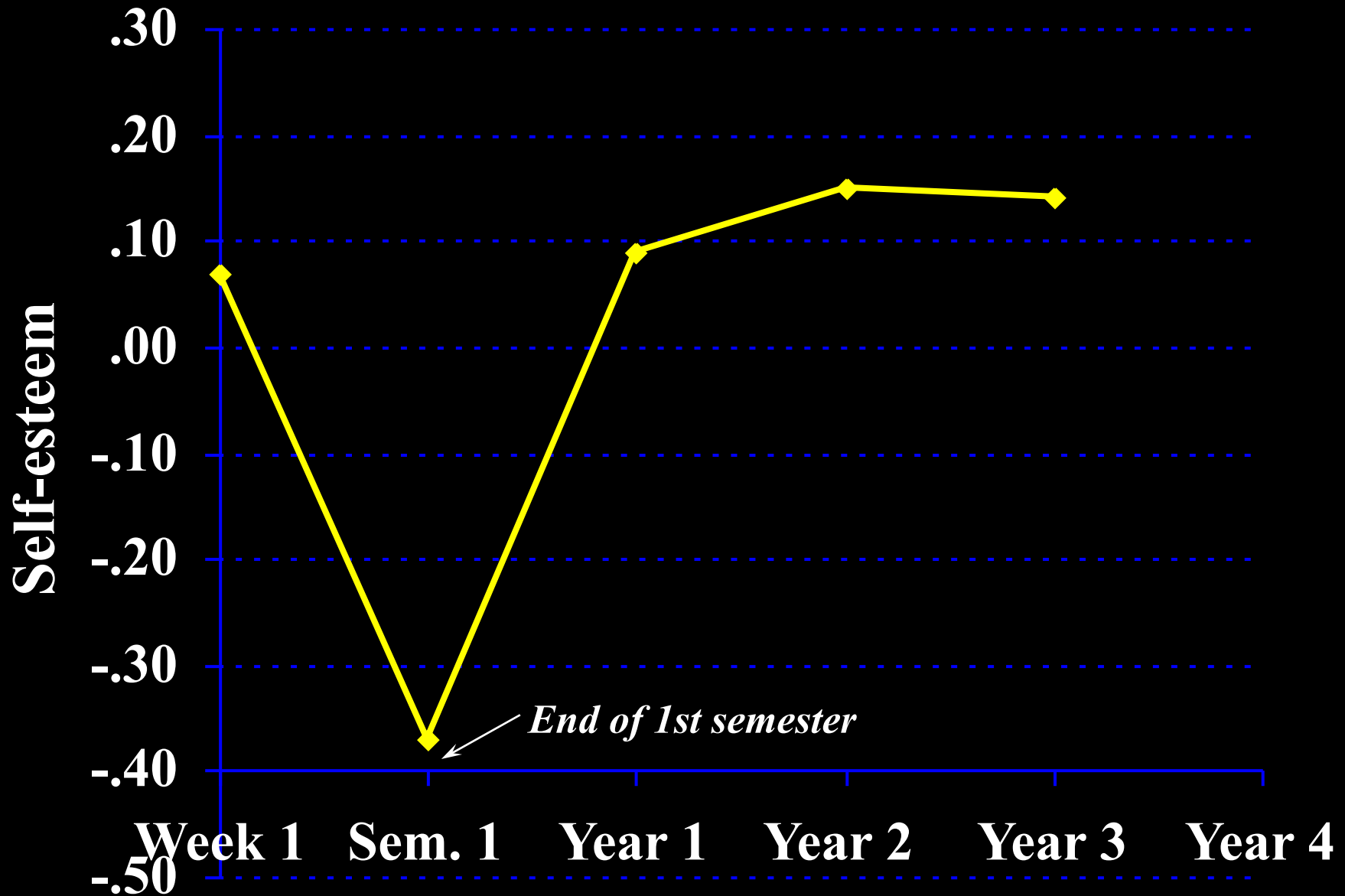
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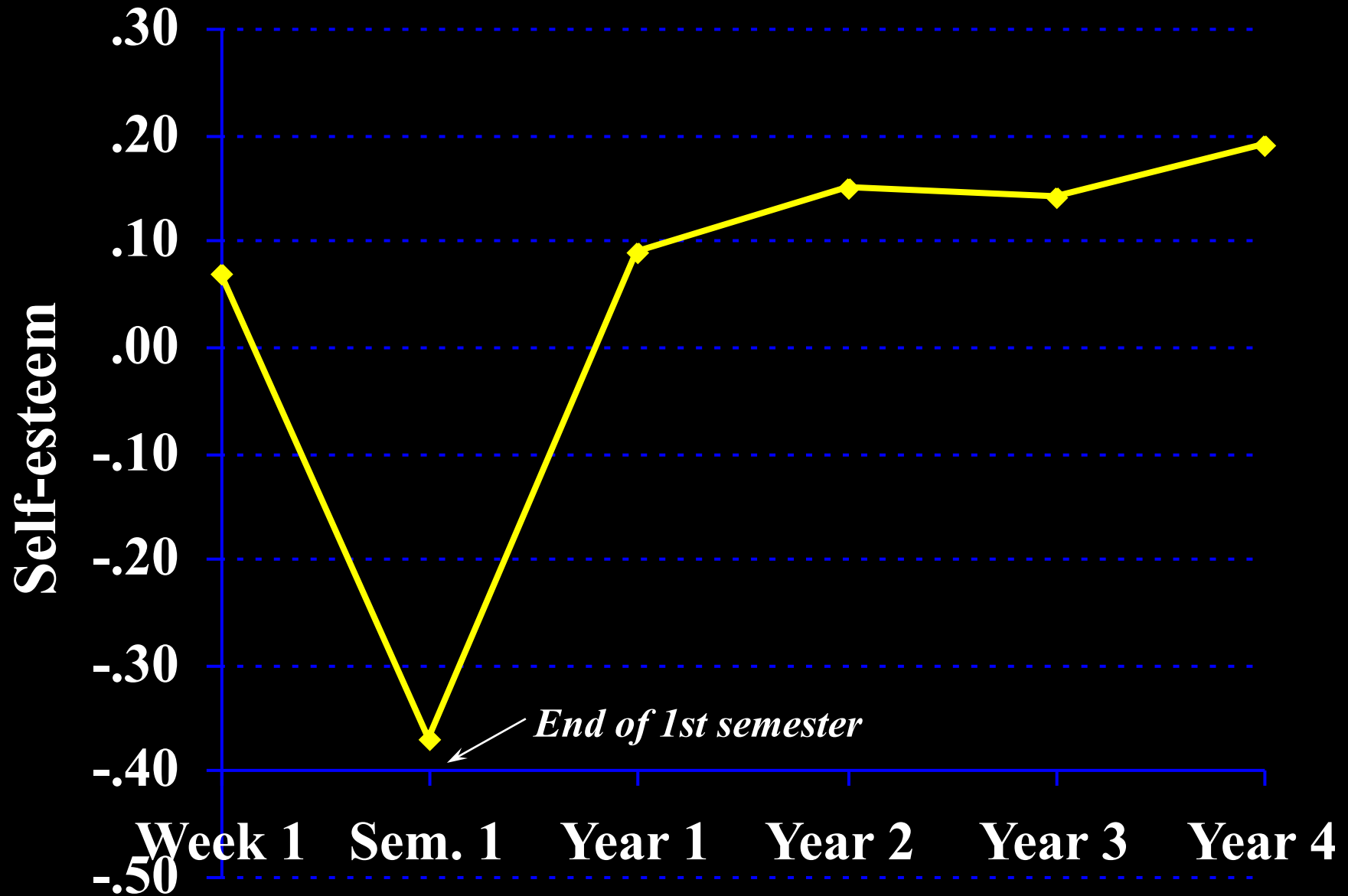
SELF-ESTEEM CHANGE DURING UNIVERSITY



SELF-ESTEEM CHANGE DURING UNIVERSITY



SELF-ESTEEM CHANGE DURING UNIVERSITY



Quotes from Participants in Longitudinal Study

- **Self-Esteem Went Down**: “I used to think I was the best or one of the best students in school. College shattered that bubble which helped me get through things. There are so many people here who are much better than I am. I’m scared. I wish I were more confident in myself.”
- “I feel upset and ashamed at my failure, even a little depressed...Basically, I think my GPA sucks, ergo I suck. I value grades over education, which is wrong”
- **Self-Esteem Went Up**: “I am proud of my work and what I accomplish. My GPA is the only thing that is really mine here.
- I feel I can do better in school. It is hard for me to accept the fact that I have a C on my transcript. But I look at my grades and I am inspired to do well. And, despite my grades, I feel like I have learned a lot in college.

**What happens to self-esteem
across the lifespan?**

Cross-Sectional Internet Study

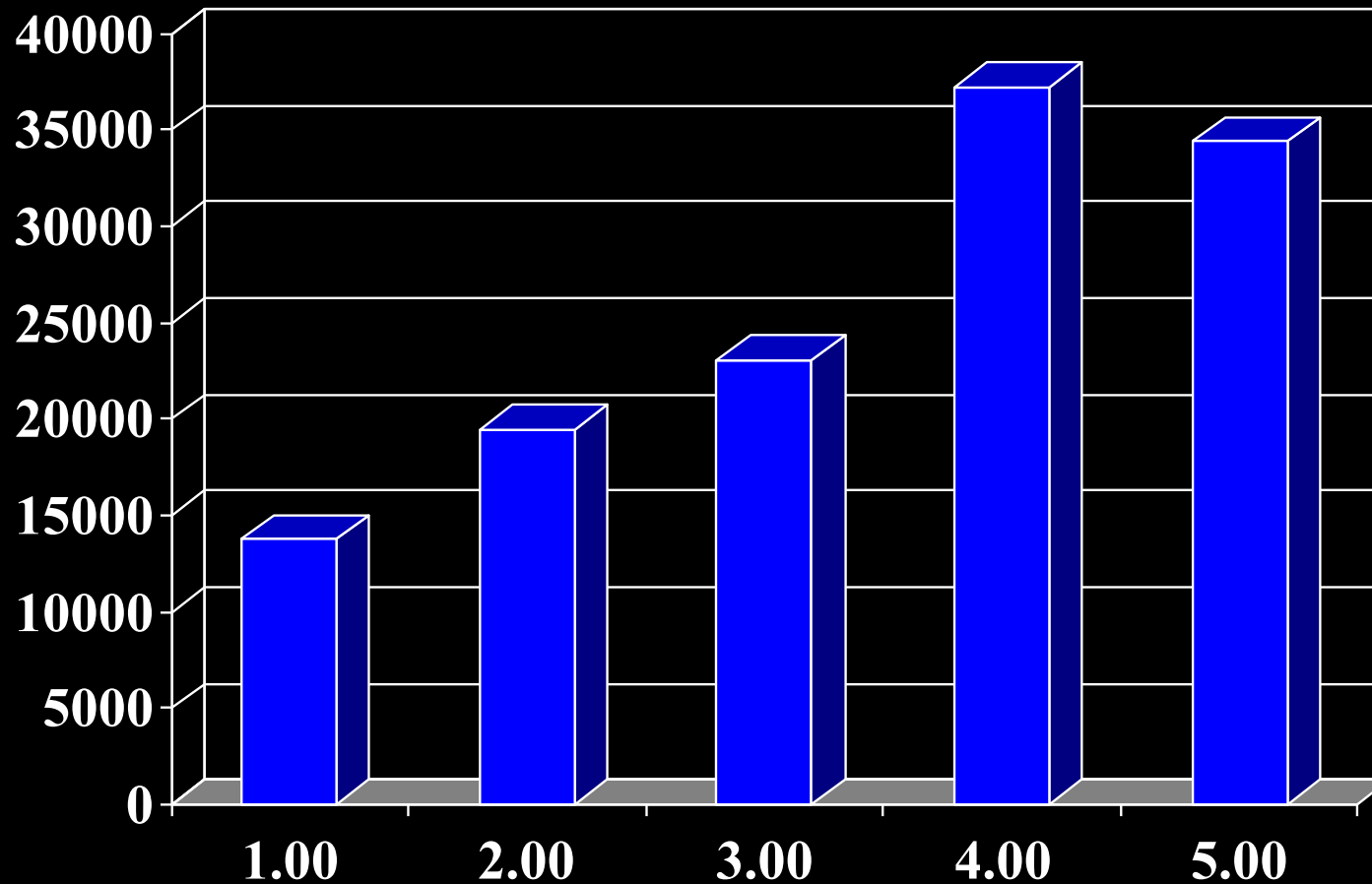
- **On-line questionnaire**
- **Many links to other sites; ratings used to generate personality feedback to user**
- **Self-Esteem assessed with item:**
 - Rate the extent to which you agree vs. disagree with this statement: “I have high self-esteem”

Strongly disagree Strongly agree
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

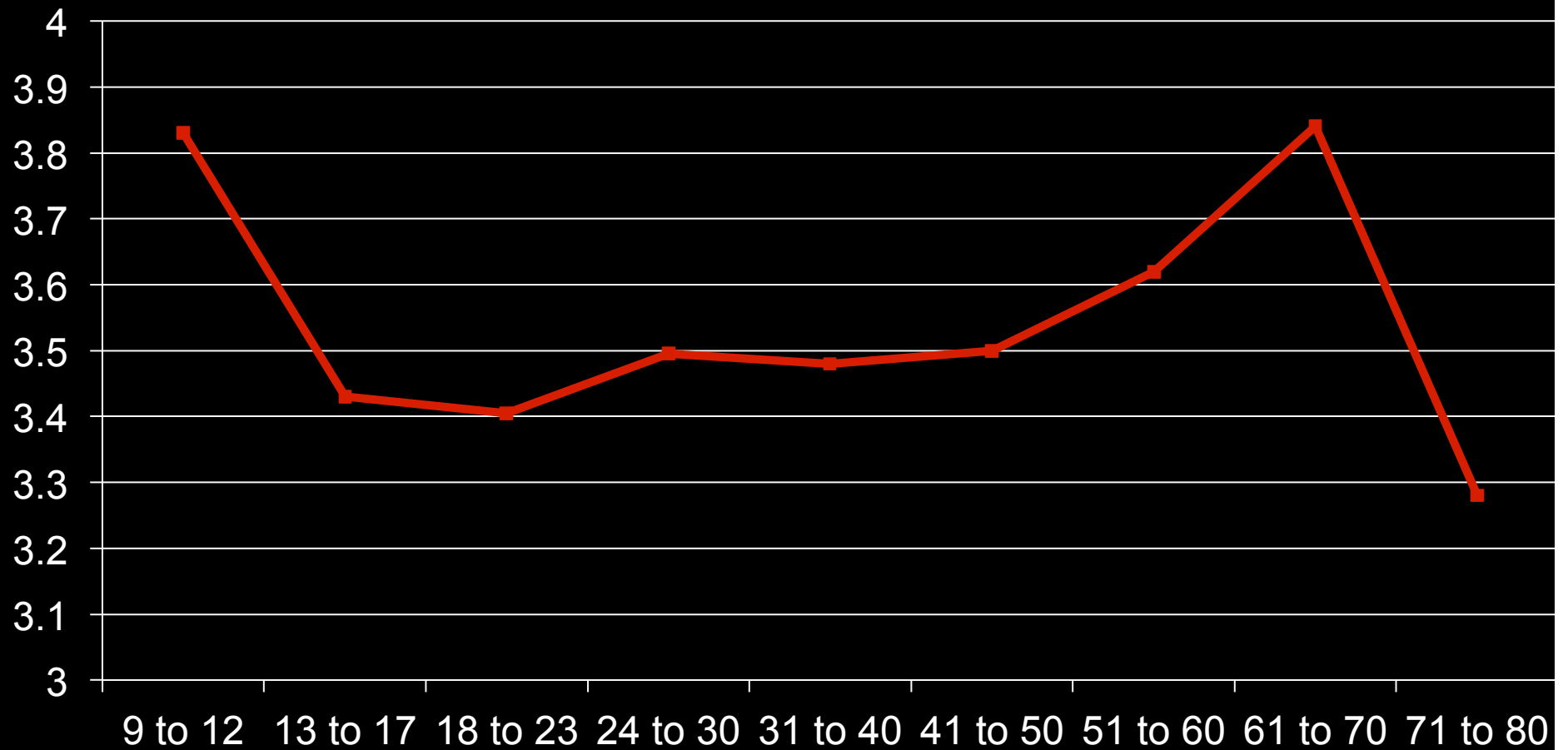
Cross-Sectional Study

<i>Age</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total (% of total)</i>
9 to 12	1,825	1,571	3,439 (2.7)
13 to 17	10,075	18,258	28,625 (22.4)
18 to 23	18,075	17,417	35,963 (28.1)
24 to 30	19,835	14,131	34,571 (27.0)
31 to 40	7,750	7,774	15,850 (12.4)
41 to 50	2,415	4,018	6,566 (5.1)
51 to 60	819	1,352	2,228 (1.7)
61 to 70	197	224	430 (.03)
71 to 90	94	69	166 (.01)
Total	61,085	64,814	127,838

Frequency Distribution of Self-Esteem Scores

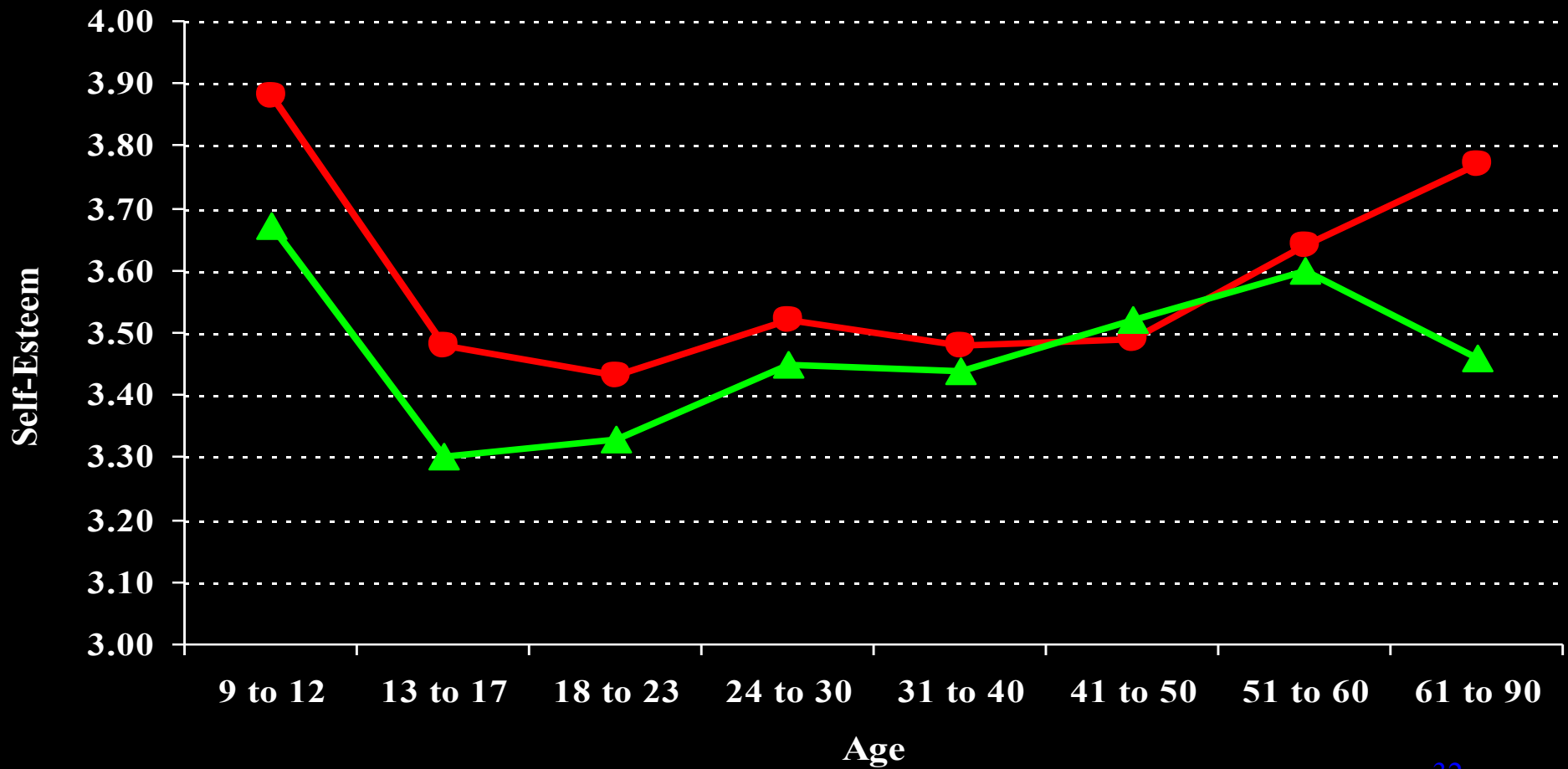


Trajectory of Self-Esteem from Age 9 to 90

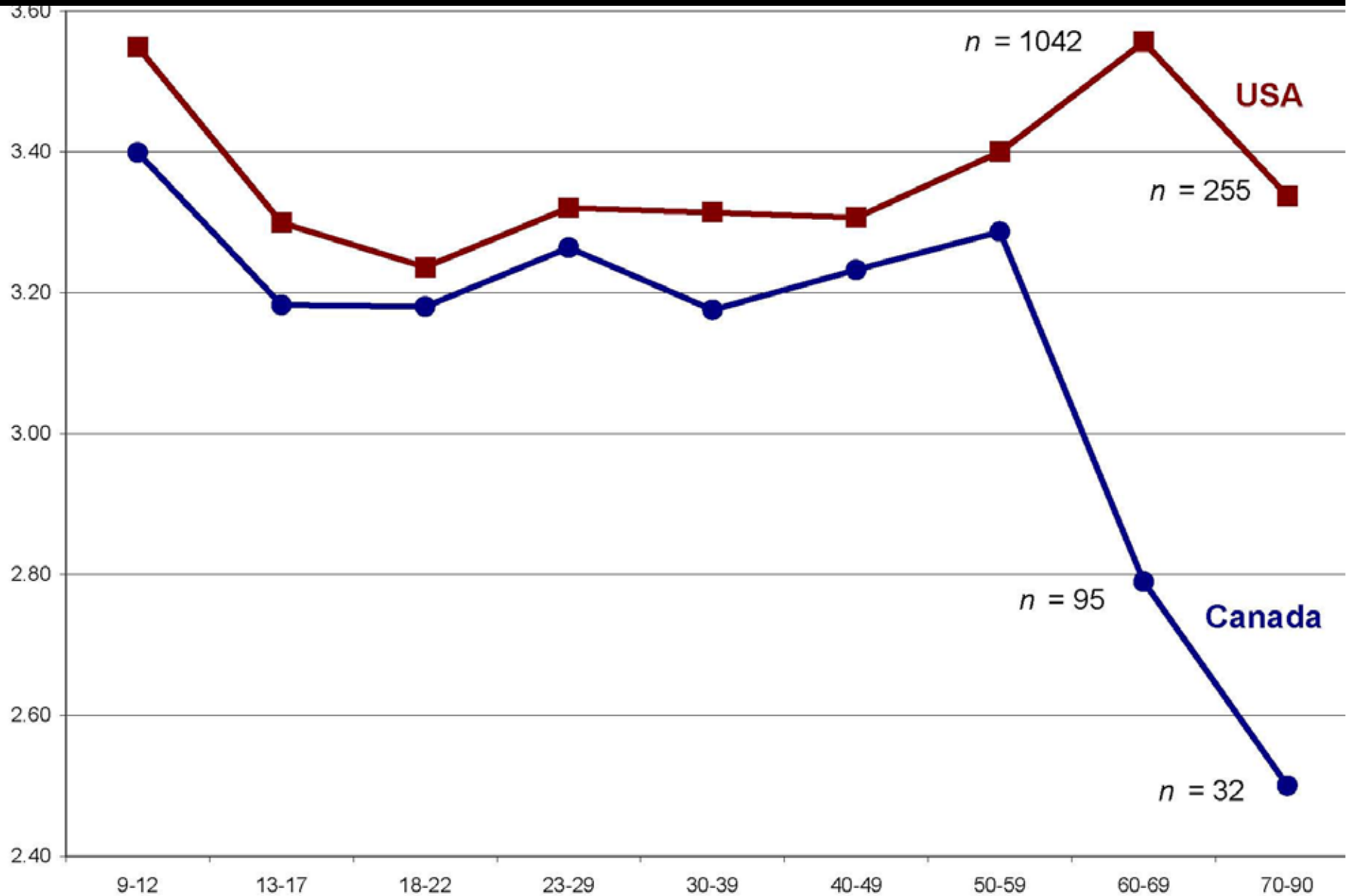


U.S. vs. Other countries

● Living within U.S. ▲ Living outside U.S.

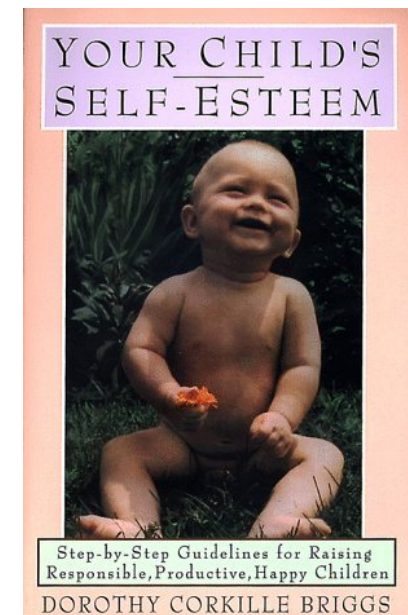
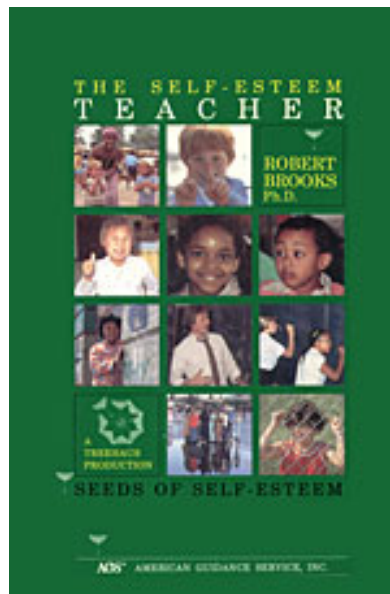
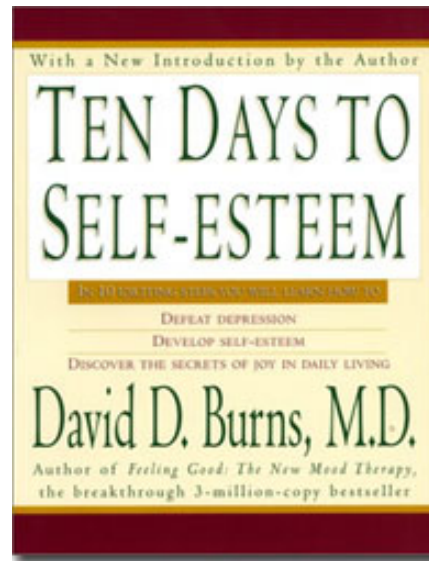
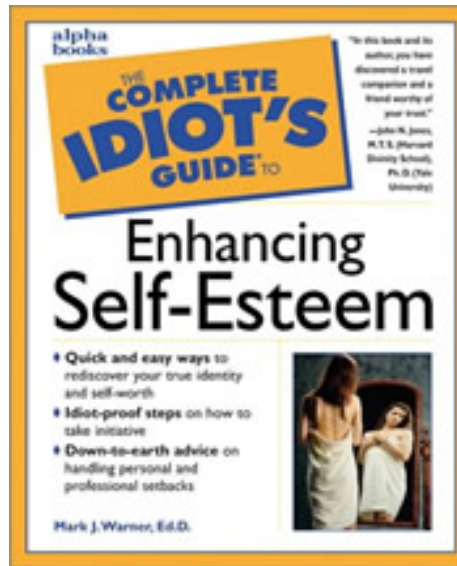


U.S. vs. Canada



Limitations with Internet Study

- Sample selectivity
 - Are internet users a select sample?
- Cross-sectional design
 - Cohort effects
 - Selective mortality



20/20 video



What did they mean by “high self-esteem” in the 20/20 video?

- **Noise-blasting study**
 - People high in NARCISSISM, not self-esteem, became aggressive after ego threat
 - Test was NPI
- **High self-esteem isn't problematic; but narcissism can be!**

Self-Esteem Programs for Kids: Positive Illusions

- **Are we creating a generation of narcissists?**
- **“I know I am good because everyone keeps telling me so.”**
- **Origins of narcissism**
 - Unrealistic, idealized positive feedback
 - Positive feedback without actual accomplishments

Can Positive Illusions Be Harmful?

- **“Threatened egotism”**: Inflated pride is easily wounded
- **High self-esteem has a “dark side”**
 - New York Times
- **Media reports of adolescent killers suggest that killers felt humiliated by peers, suffered from wounded pride and powerlessness**
- **Shame-rage spiral; shame may be brought on by excessive pride**

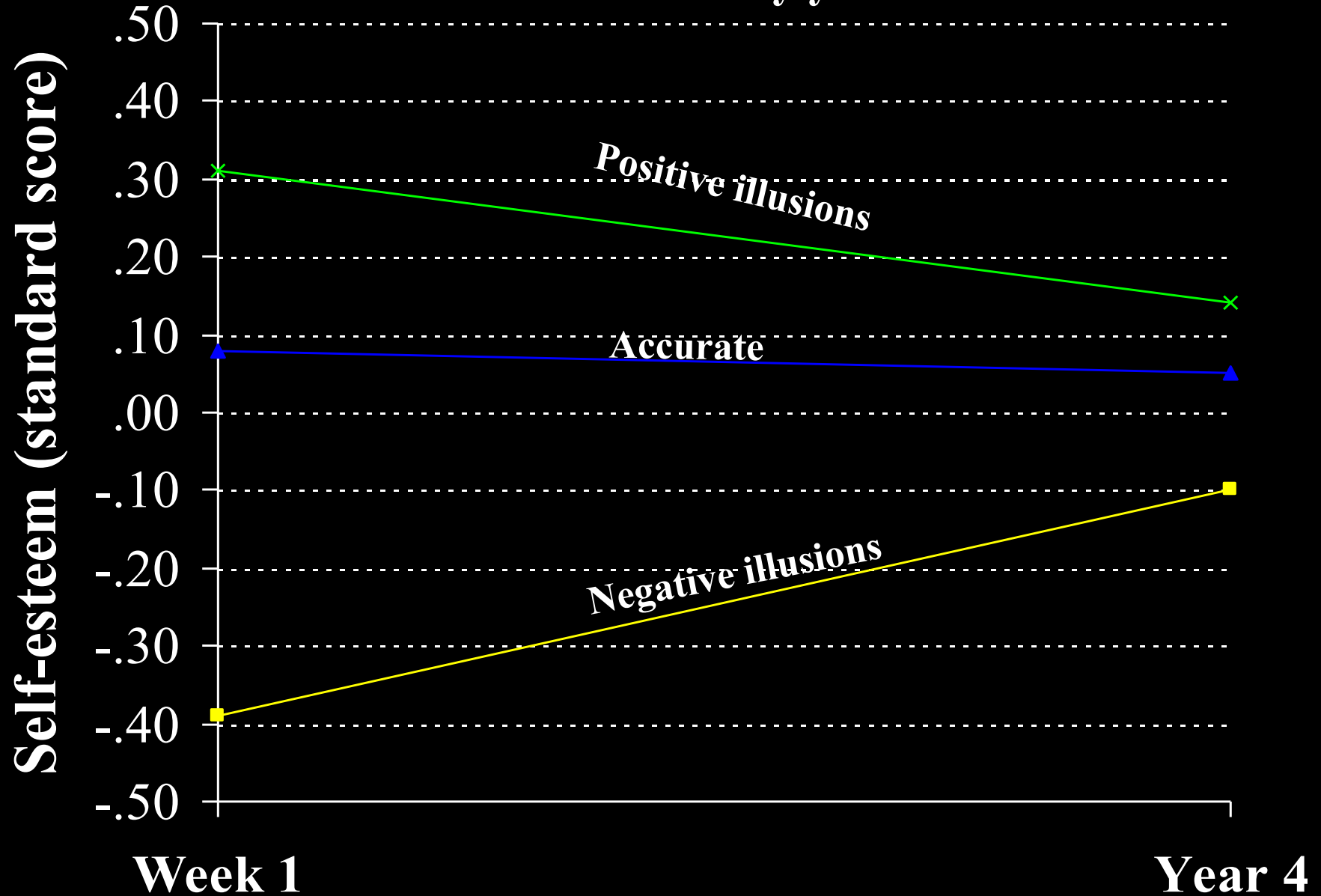
What's the Process?

- **When we are insulted and humiliated, we feel shame – a painful emotion that we want to avoid feeling at all costs**
- **Narcissists are so dependent on their inflated high self-esteem, they externalize blame**
 - Convert shame into anger, expressed as aggression

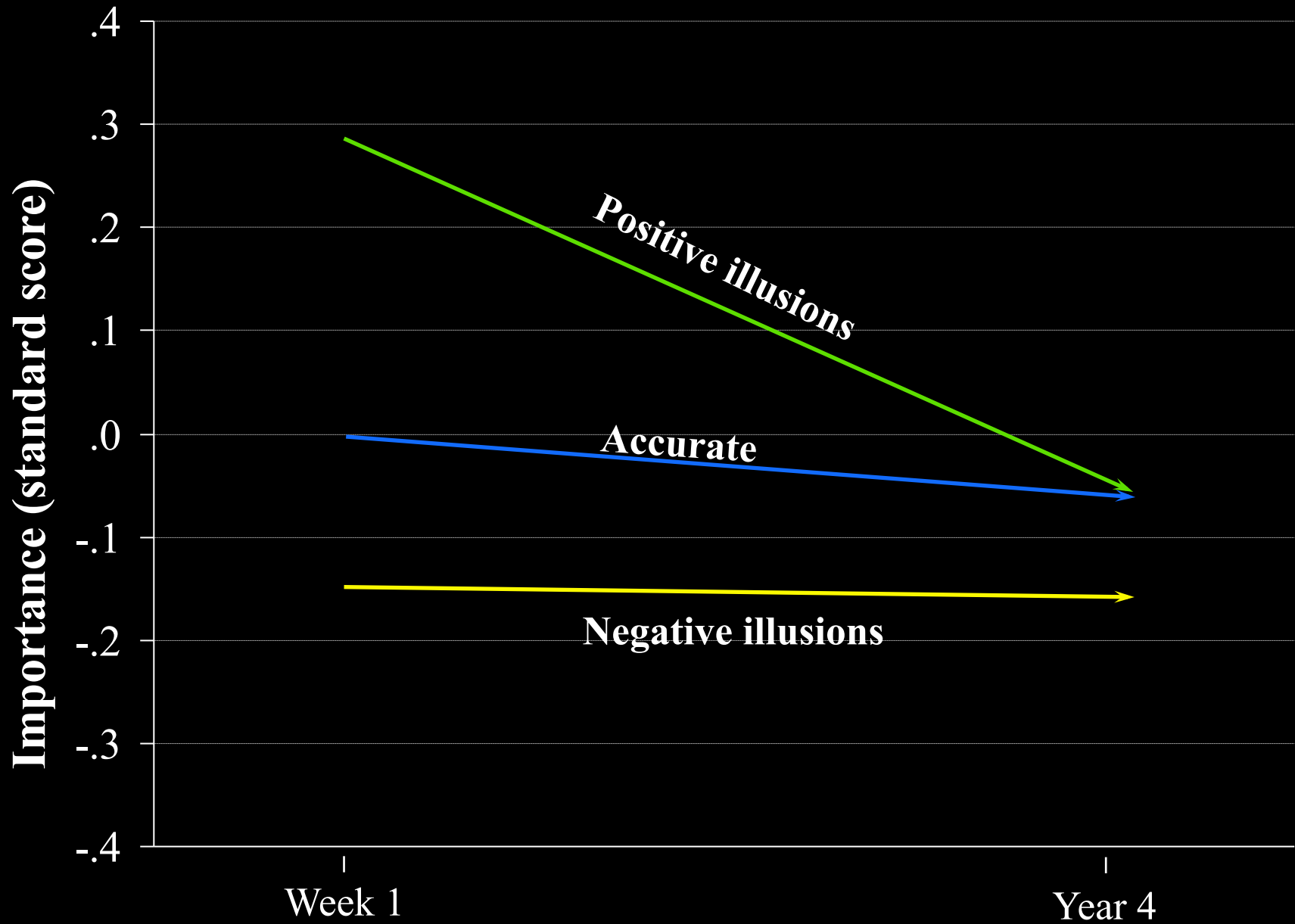
What about positive illusions in undergrads?

- **Research study identified students who entered university with overly positive beliefs about their academic ability (i.e., positive illusions)**
- **Compared to students with more accurate beliefs, students with positive illusions:**
 - Generally happier but less happy over the course of college
 - Did not perform better in school, despite thinking they would
 - More likely to disengage from school (e.g., say “grades are not important to me”)
 - More likely to drop out of university

POSITIVE ILLUSIONS AND SELF-ESTEEM CHANGE Across University years



IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT



Research suggests... Positive Illusions are a “Mixed Blessing”

- **In the short term, positive illusions are associated with:**
 - Psychological well-being and self-esteem
 - Better performance on experimental tasks
- **In the long term, positive illusions are associated with:**
 - Decreasing levels of well-being and self-esteem
 - Disengagement from school and increased likelihood of dropping out
 - Being less liked by one’s peers
 - Higher levels of aggression

Assessing the Self with Narrative

Dan McAdams:

**To truly know someone, you
must know their life story**

Self-Narratives: Key Components

- Self-defining memory = single episode in your life
- *Life chapters*: “Think about your life as if it were a book. Please divide your life into its major chapters and briefly describe each chapter”
- *Key events*: peak experience; nadir experience; turning point; earliest memory; important childhood, adolescent, and adult memory; other important memory”
- *Significant people*: “Each person’s life story is populated by a few significant people who have a major impact on the narrative.”
- *Future script*: “As your life story extends into the future, what is your script or plan for what is to happen next in your life?”

Self-Narratives: Key Components

- ***Stresses and problems:*** “All life stories include significant conflicts, unresolved issues, problems to be solved, and periods of great stress.”
- ***Personal ideology:*** “Your fundamental beliefs and values are an important part of your life story”
- ***Life theme:*** “Looking back over your entire life story as a book with chapters, episodes, and characters, can you discern a central theme, message, or idea that runs throughout the text? What is the major theme of your life?”

Trait Taxonomies

What is a trait?

- Almost any adjective (or sometimes a noun) that describes the way some people are and others aren't

Traits are the Basic Building Blocks of Personality

- Shy
- Happy
- Organized
- Punctual
- Talkative
- Creative

Key Elements of Traits

- Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')

Key Elements of Traits

- Chuck and Lyndie
 - INTERNAL traits vs. EXTERNAL situation

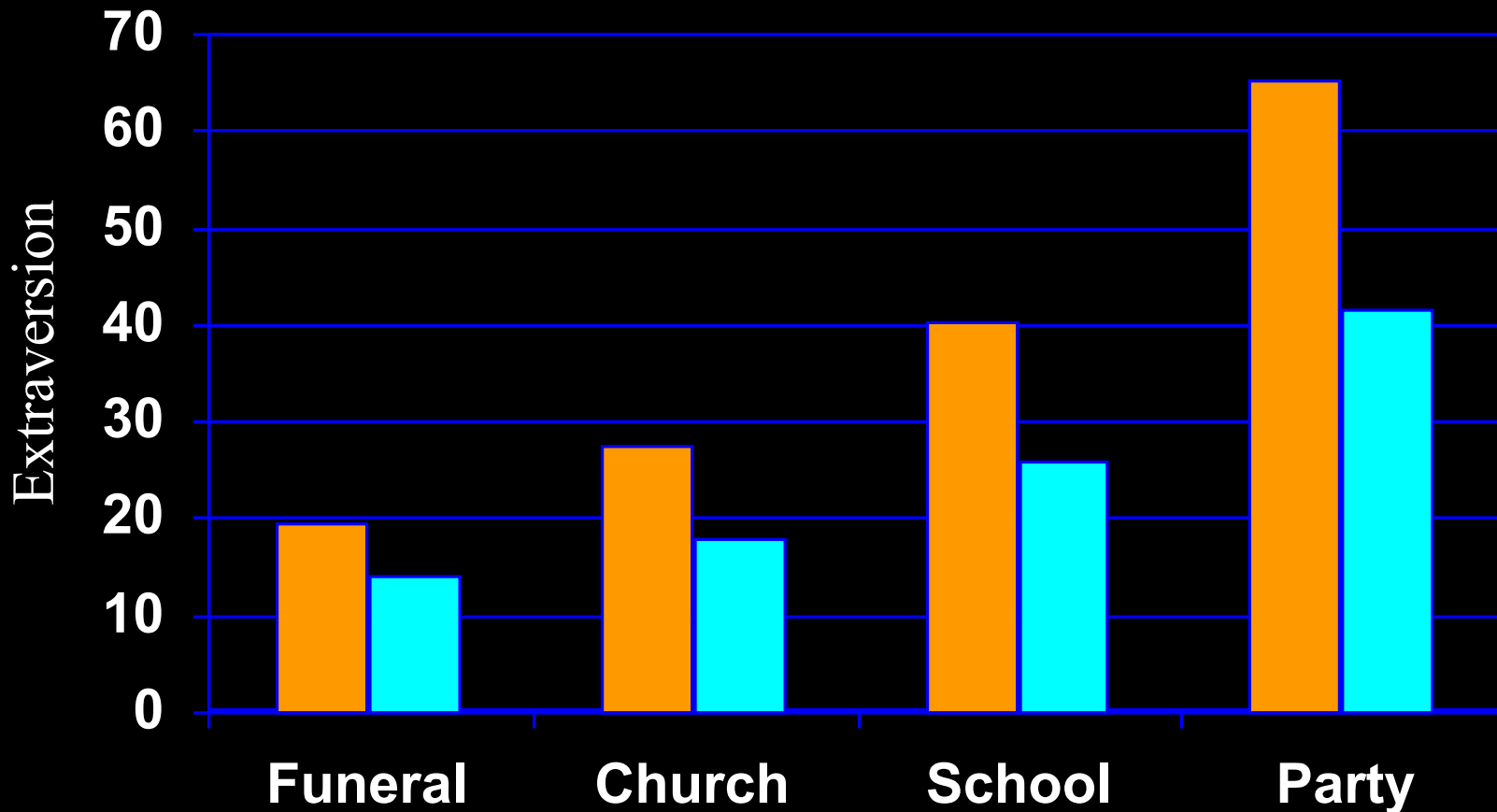


Key Elements of Traits

- Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')
- Consistent across 'similar' situations
 - People who are friendly at school also tend to be friendly at home, at work, when they meet new people, etc.
 - But, situations also influence behaviour

Extraversion Across Situations

■ Jane the Extravert ■ Jim the Introvert





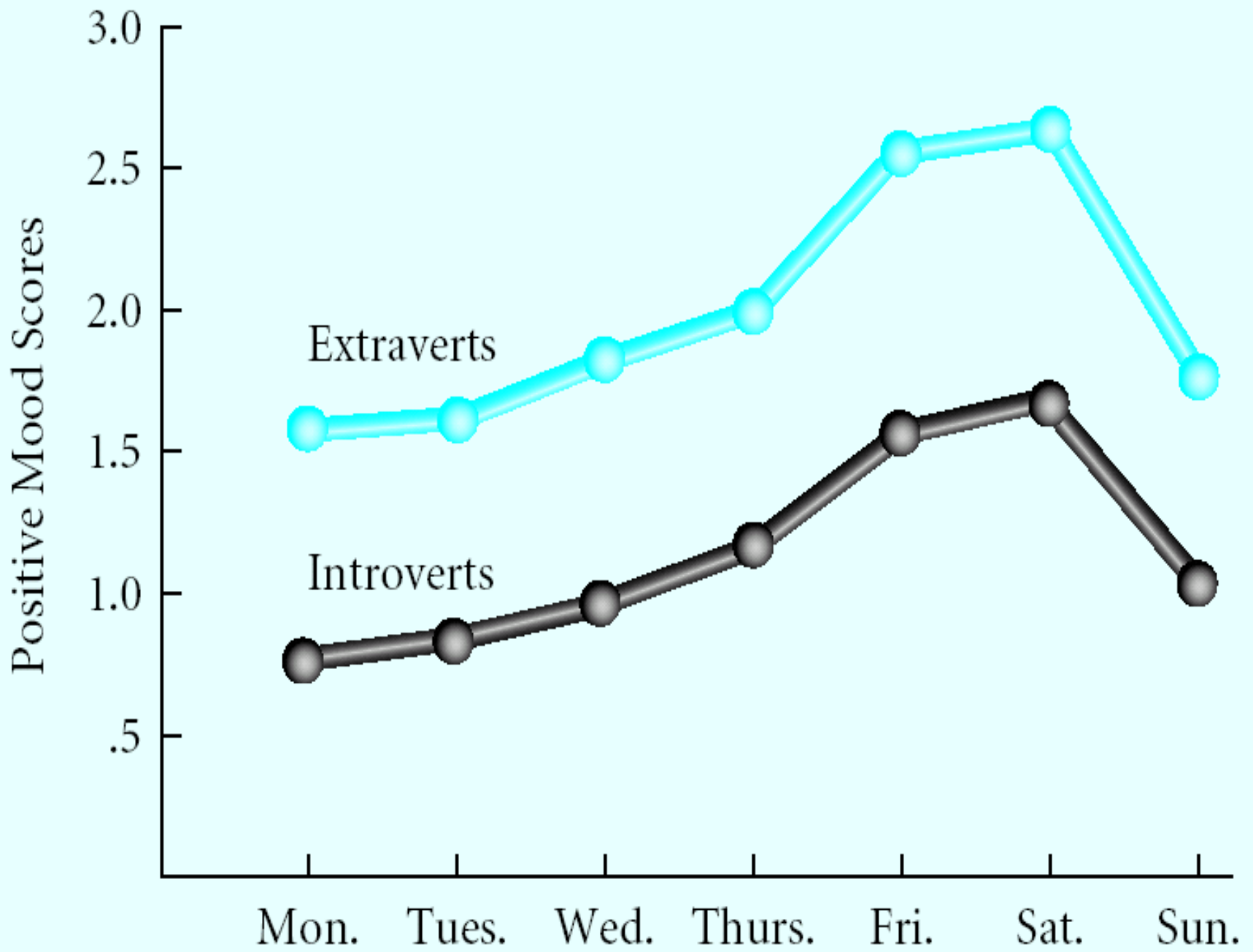
Key Elements of Traits

- Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')
- Consistent across 'similar' situations
- Stable across time

Key Elements of Traits

- Traits are stable across time



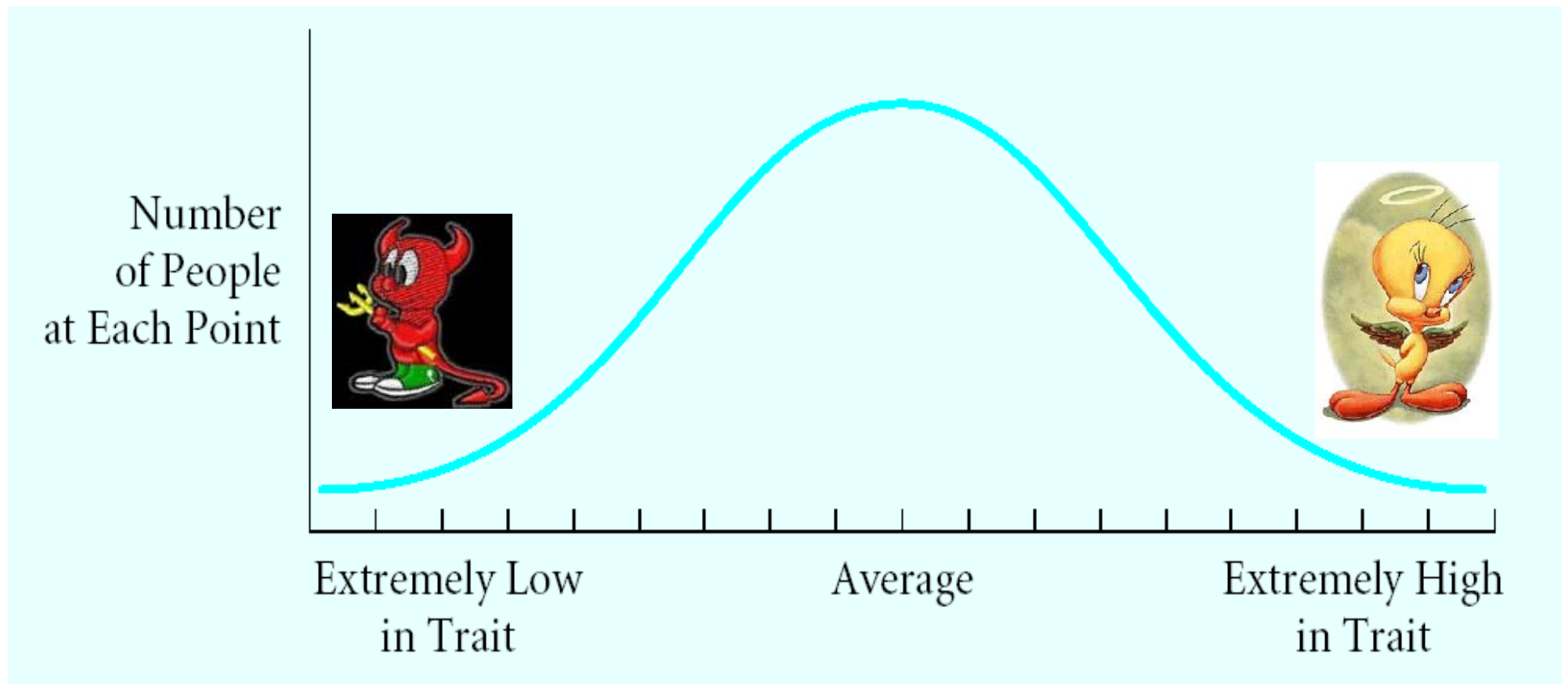


Key Elements of Traits

- Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')
- Consistent across 'similar' situations
- Stable across time
- Universal dimensions: Individual differences (across people)
 - Useful way of describing and comparing personality differences in all people

Key Elements of Traits

- Compare people across a continuum



Key Elements of Traits

- Personal ('internal') rather than situational ('external')
- Consistent across 'similar' situations
- Stable across time
- Universal dimensions: Individual differences (across people)
 - Useful way of describing and comparing personality differences in all people
- Descriptive, not explanatory
 - Why did he talk a lot? Because he's extraverted

What Aren't Personality Traits?

- Temporary states (e.g., embarrassed)
- Attitudes (e.g., sexist, liberal)
- Cognitive ability (e.g., GRE scores)
- Physical attributes (e.g., tall, short, thin)
- Social categories (e.g., bully, wimp, jock)

How can we figure out which traits are most important?

- Lexical Approach
 - We can learn about personality by studying *language*
 - If a trait is important, people everywhere will have a word for it
 - cross-cultural universality
 - If a trait is very important, there will be many words for it
 - Synonym frequency

Fundamental Lexical Hypothesis

- “the most important individual differences in human transactions will come to be encoded as single terms in some or all of the world’s languages”
-Goldberg, 1990

Trait Taxonomy

- Comprehensive system that includes all of the major traits of personality
- Traits in a taxonomy are organized in some systematic manner
 - Hierarchical system
 - Some traits more important (or “basic”) than others

Trait Hierarchy

Extraversion

outgoing friendly social

Many clubs Likes parties
Club Many friends
president

Lexical Class Exercise

- What slang words do you use to describe a person?

Research Study: The Lexical Approach to Pride

- Research Procedure (Step 1)
 - Asked participants to “list words that characterize what you think, feel, and do when you feel pride”
 - 205 participants listed a total of 795 different words
 - 65 words were listed by at least 2% of the sample (i.e., 4 people)

- Happy 64%
- Confident 64%
- Strong 34%
- Accomplish 30%
- Smile 29%
- Proud 24%
- Excited 20%
- Egotistic 20%
- Joy 18%
- Satisfied 17%
- Arrogant 15%
- Energetic 15%
- Powerful 13%
- Self-esteem 13%
- Show-off 11%
- Stand up straight 11%
- Success 10%
- Content 10%
- Achieve 10%
- Good 9%
- Better 9%
- Motivated 9%
- Respect 9%

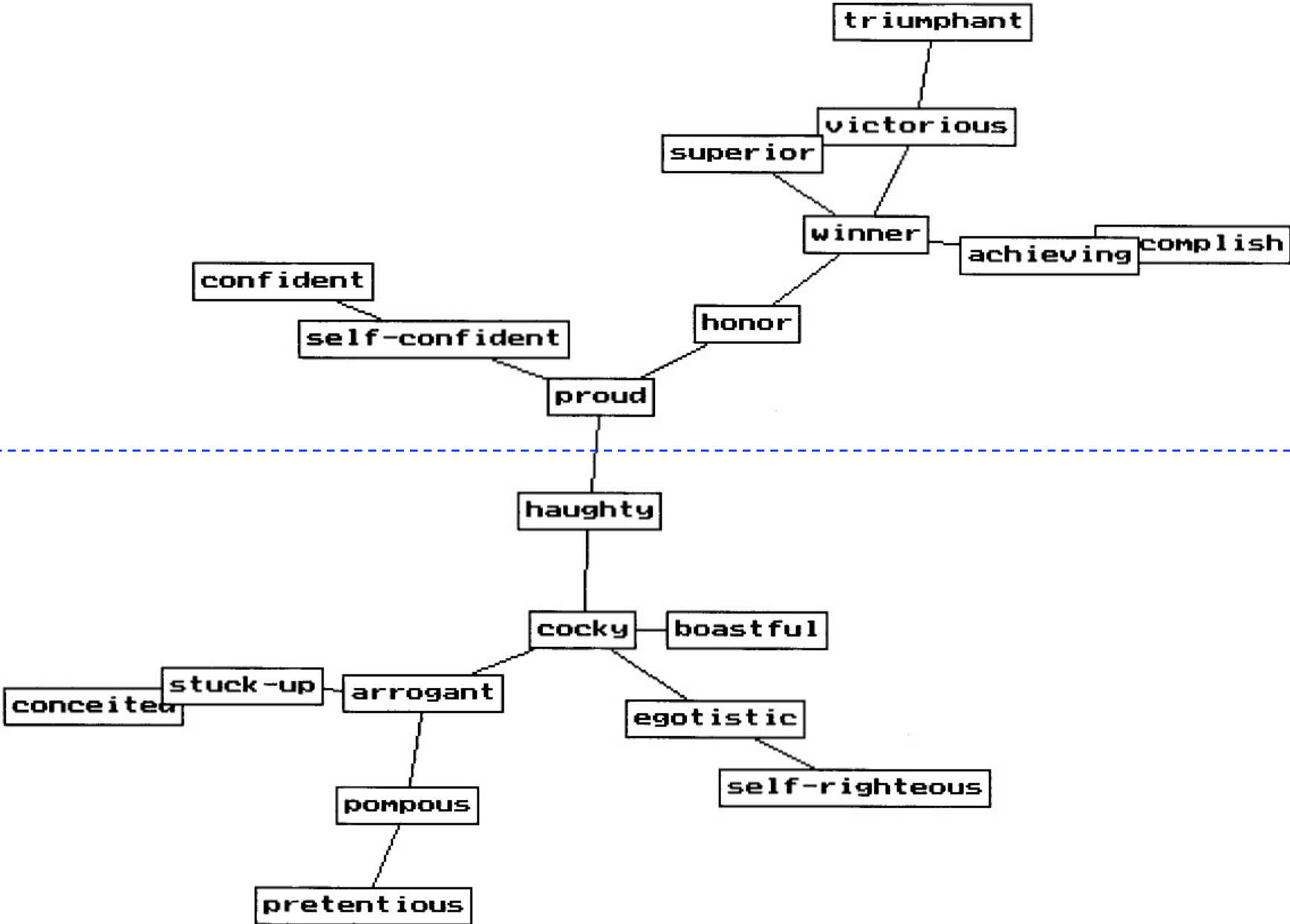
- Superior 9%
- Boastful 8%
- Fulfilled 8%
- Courageous 7%
- Cocky 6%
- Relief 6%
- Head held high 6%
- Honor 6%
- Determined 6%
- Stubborn 6%
- Hard-working 6%
- Laugh 6%
- Love 6%
- Intelligent 5%
- Self-worth 5%
- Knowledgeable 5%
- Great 5%
- Winner 5%
- Haughty 4%
- Important 4%
- Self-centered 4%

- Independent 4%
- Overwhelming 4%
- Perseverant 3%
- Pleased 3%
- Positive 4%
- Relaxed 3%
- Reward 3%
- Self-assured 3%
- Self-confident 3%
- Special 4%
- Support 3%
- Talkative 4%
- Tall 4%
- Worth 3%
- Ability 4%
- Encourage 4%
- Conceited 3%
- Enthusiasm 3%
- Fearless 3%
- Friendly 3%
- Goal 3%

Pride Lexical Study

- Step 2: Figure out how words group together
 - Are there coherent sub-groups of words within the pride domain?
 - How are all the words related to each other?
 - Some should be more similar to each other than others

Lexical Structure of Pride



Developing a Trait Taxonomy

Part 2

- Statistical (Experiential) Approach
 - Factor analysis
 - Step 1: Ask participants to rate the extent to which each trait describes them
 - Step 2: Enter ratings into *factor analysis* program, which tells you how traits “hold together” in people’s experiences

Statistical Structure of Pride: Results from Factor Analysis

Factor 1

- Accomplished
- Achieving
- Confident
- Happy
- Head held high
- Goal-fulfilled
- Self-assured
- Self-esteem
- Triumphant

Factor 2

- Arrogant
- Boastful
- Cocky
- Conceited
- Egotistic
- Haughty
- Self-centered
- Self-righteous
- Snobbish

Developing a Trait Taxonomy

Part 3

- Theoretical Approach
 - Think about how many traits *should* matter, based on some pre-articulated theory

Two Facet Theory

- **Authentic pride**
 - Promotes social investments
 - Fosters genuine self-esteem
- **Hubristic pride**
 - Related to aggression, hostility
 - Narcissism
- **If findings from conceptual study and factor analysis study converge with theoretical perspective, then we've probably found the structure of pride**

Theoretical and Measurement Issues in Trait Research: Person-Situation Debate



1968



1968

PERSONALITY
AND
ASSESSMENT

Walter Mischel



What was going on in '68?

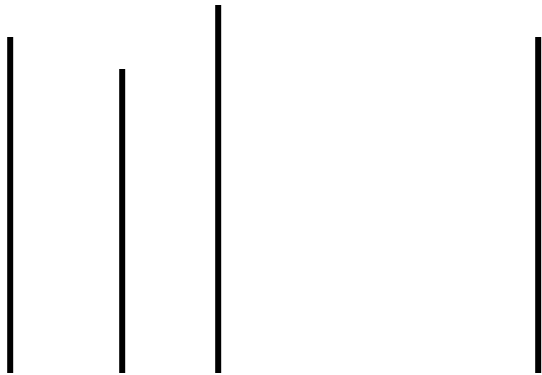
- Changes in Field of Personality:
 - End of the era of mega-theories (Freud, Jung, Maslow, Murray, etc.)
 - Era of middle-level theories
 - Domain-specific
 - Personality traits used to describe and predict certain types of behavior
 - $B = f(P)$
 - Behavior is determined by personality

What was going on in '68?

- Rise of Social Psychology
 - *Lewin's Interactionism*
 - Behavior as a function of person and situation
 - $B = f(P \times S)$
 - *Festinger's Situationism*
 - Reduced to $B = f(S)$
 - Personality = error variance, irrelevant

Situationism

- Emphasis on the *power of the situation* to shape people's behavior
 - Asch's conformity study



- Milgram's obedience study
- Zimbardo's prison study



Mischel's Critique



- Personality does not predict behavior
 - $B = f(P)$ is wrong
- People act differently in different situations
- Knowing a person's level on a particular trait does not allow you to predict their behavior on any specific occasion

The result of Mischel's critique

- Personality psychology suffered!
 - Fewer grad programs
 - Currently, almost no solely P programs in the US or Canada, and possibly more pure S programs than combined S-P
 - Fewer researchers in the area
 - Fewer jobs

The Result of Mischel's Critique

- Social Psychology blossomed
 - Huge area of research
 - Many grad programs, researchers, and jobs
- But, over time, personality psychology fought back... and became stronger

Personality's Response

1. Personality traits predict behavior, but over the long-term

- Your level of Extraversion is
 - a good predictor of the total number of times you will go to parties this quarter
 - but, a weak predictor of whether you will go to a party this Friday night
- Like batting average; seasonal weather
- To predict behaviors, use *aggregation*
 - Averaging/summing together a set of behaviors

Personality's Response

2. Broad traits predict broad behaviors,
narrow traits predict narrow behaviors
 - Conscientiousness → academic performance
 - Punctuality → showing up to class on time

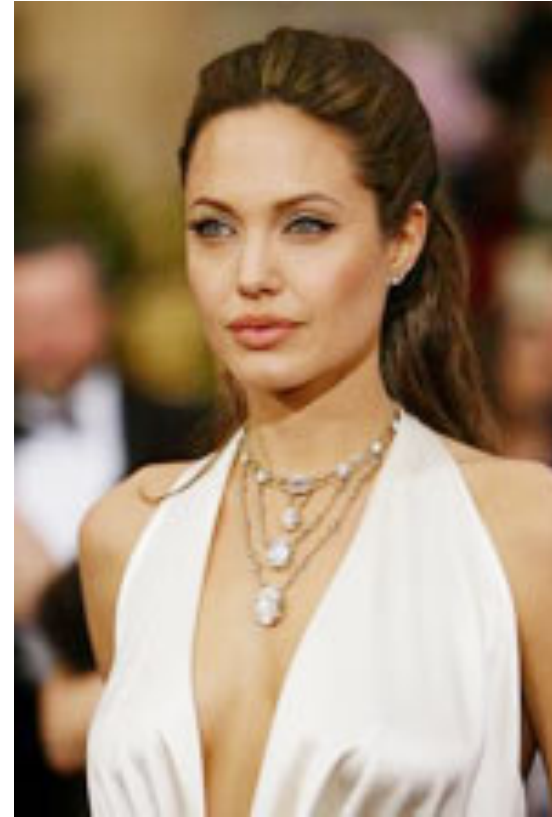
Personality's Response

3. People may differ in how they behave across situations, but are consistent relative to other people

Brad and Angelina



Moderate Extraversion



High Extraversion

Brad and Angelina in Different Situations

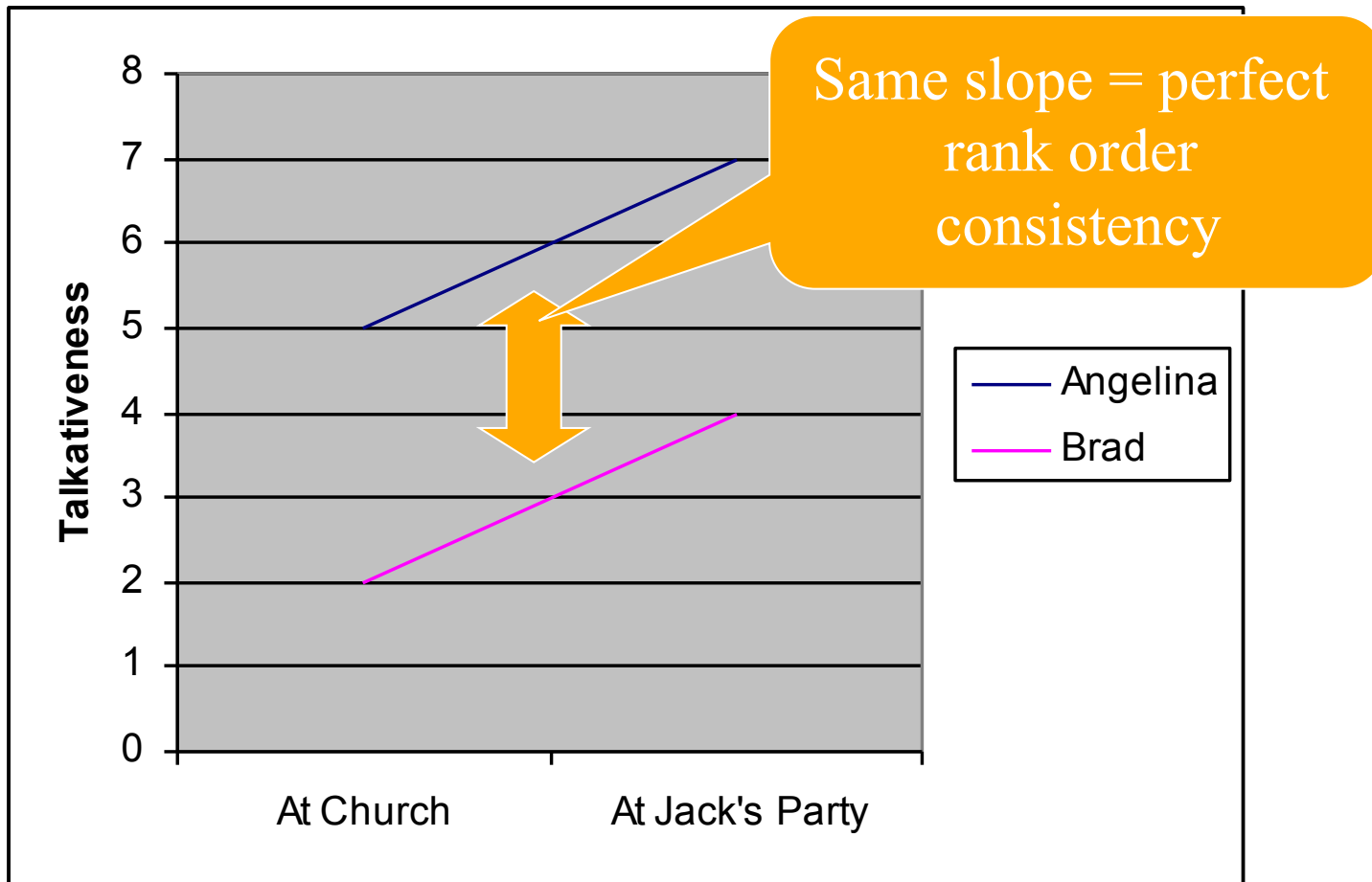
- At Church



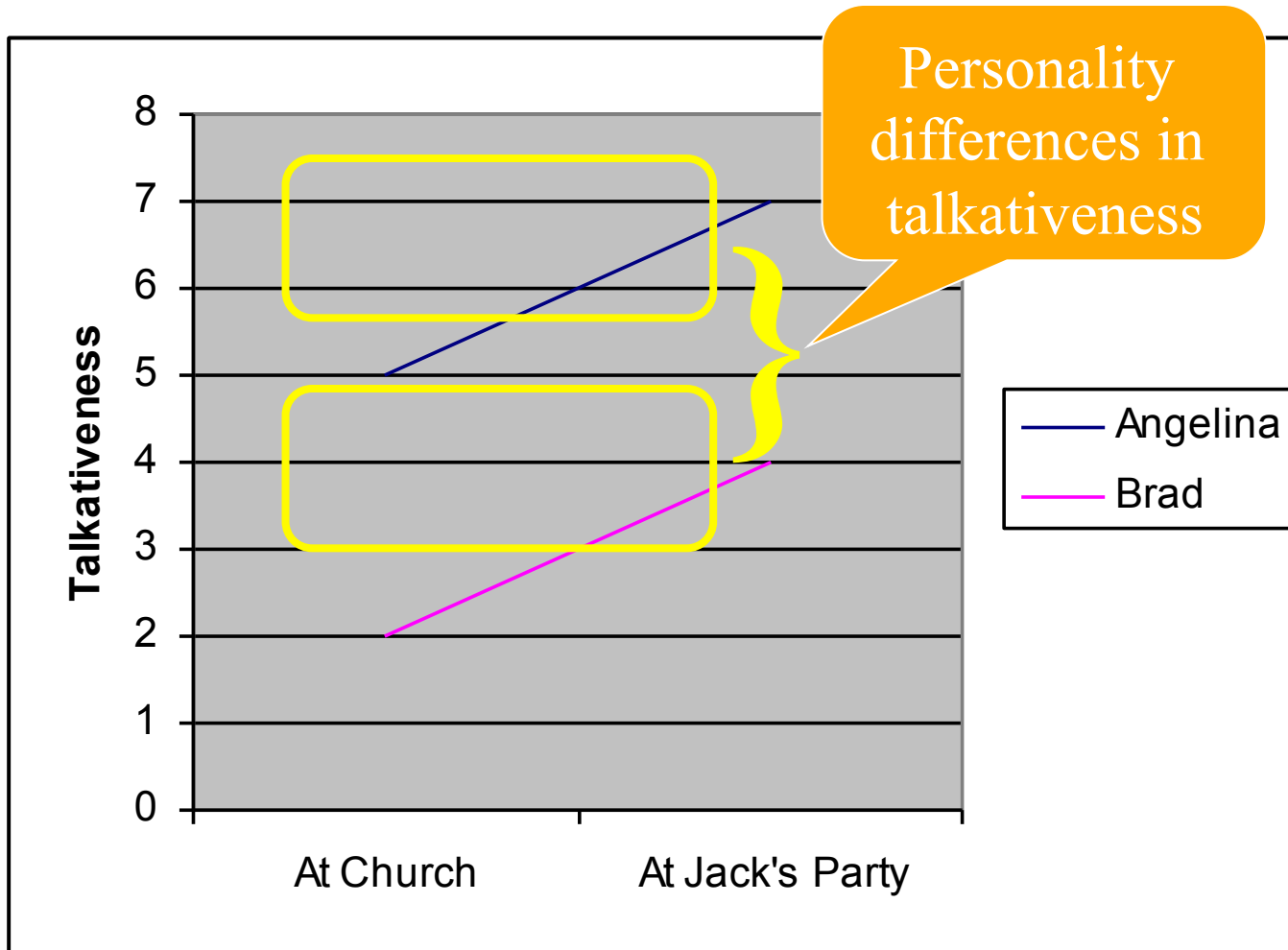
- At Jack's party



Rank-order consistency



Rank-order consistency



Personality's Response

4. Personality traits are stable over long periods of time

- The degree to which a person is shy, organized, creative, friendly, etc. tends to be consistent from week to week, year to year, and even across the entire lifespan

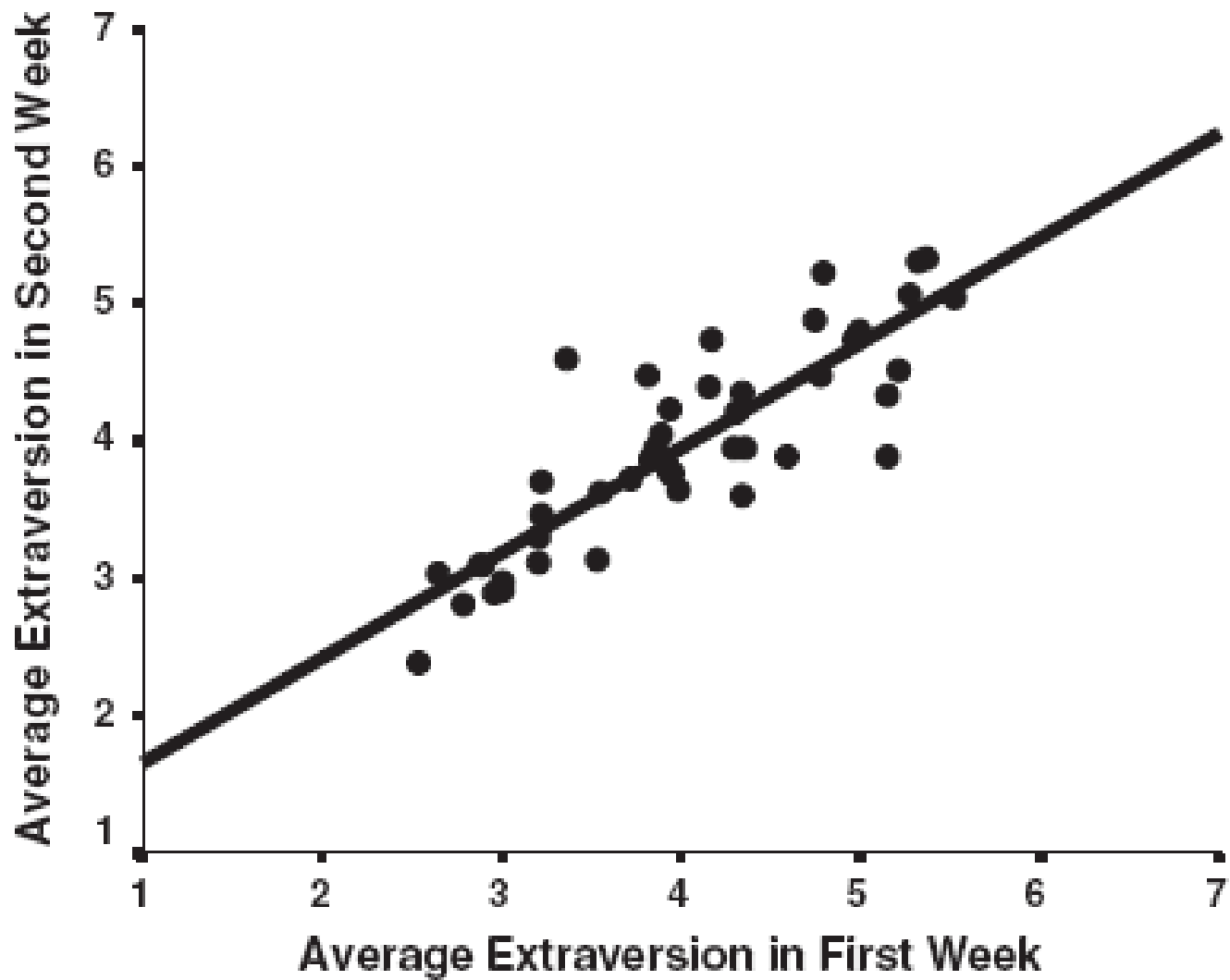


Fig. 3. Stability in behavior over time. Each point in this graph represents one person's average level of extraversion in 2 different weeks. How people act on average in one week is highly similar to how they act on average in another week.

Adult Personality is Linked to Child Temperament

Temperament

Dimension

Activity level

Sociability

Emotional reactivity

Attention level

Orienting sensitivity

Big Five

Dimension

Extraversion

Extraversion, Agreeableness

Neuroticism

Conscientiousness

Openness

Resolution of Person-Situation Debate: Interactionism

- Both personality and situation are important predictors of behavior

So how do we know which matters, when?

- **Situational characteristics** are better predictors of behavior
 - when situation is strong—with a **high** level of constraint
- **Personality traits** are better predictors of behavior
 - when situation is weak—with a **low** level of constraint

- **Degree of constraint**

High

people likely to show little
variation in behavior
(situation most important)

Low

people likely to show most
variation in behavior
(personality most important)



- **Situation**

Church

Job interview

Elevator

Family dinner

Class

Movies

Restroom

Bus

Date

Bar

Football game

Dorm lounge

Park

Own room

Midterm Exam 1

- Approx. 45 Multiple Choice items (worth about 70-75% of total exam score)
- 1 essay question (worth about 25-30% of total exam score)
- Be sure to bring a No. 2 Pencil!

Midterm 1 Topics

- Class introduction; What is personality?
- Methods in personality research
 - LOTS of methods!
 - Validity & Reliability
- Psychoanalytic Approach
 - Origins of theory, Freud's Basic Principles
 - Contemporary Psychoanalytic Approaches

Midterm 1 Topics

- Phenomenological Approach/Motive Theories
 - Motive Theorists (3 Ms)
 - Humanistic Approach: Maslow, Rogers
 - The Self
 - Self-Esteem
- Trait Approach
 - What are traits, development of trait taxonomy
 - Person-Situation Debate & Resolution

Midterm 1 Coverage

- Emphasize lectures & lecture notes
- Textbook chapters covered:
 - 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 14, 3, & 4
- For material that's in textbook and lectures, know it well!
- Material that's in the textbook and not even touched on in lecture will not be targeted in exam questions
 - But could be used in your essay response₁₀₂