



CHAPTER 14 SUMMARY

In addition to considering the various influences of cognition on affect (Chapter 13), a significant body of research has considered the influences of affect on cognition, and in particular, the influences of mood. This research finds clear effects even of small mood manipulations on a variety of cognitive processes. The effects for positive mood are more clear-cut than the effects of negative mood in general. Positive moods lead to more prosocial behavior. These robust effects may be explained by the cheerful person's sensitivity to positive reinforcement; helping in a good mood is enhanced by focus of attention on oneself, requests emphasizing the rewards of helping, an emphasis on a positive social outlook, and the opportunity to maintain one's positive mood. People in a negative mood may or may not be helpful, depending on the circumstances.

Mood reliably increases people's memory for mood-congruent material due to both automatic and controlled processes. Effects for positive moods are stronger than those for negative moods, with the exception of people who are chronically depressed, who also show strong mood-congruent memory. Another mood-memory phenomenon, mood state-dependent memory, posited that people would best recall material that was learned and retrieved in the same mood state; this hypothesis has little support.

Mood generally influences judgment in a mood-congruent direction as well. Arousal similarly creates arousal-congruent judgments. Again, the effects of positive mood are more reliable than the effects of negative moods. Moreover, the effects on adults are more reliable than the effects on children. Various explanations for the effects have been proposed but, for the most part, remain to be tested. Mood also affects people's style of decision making, with positive moods making people more expansive, inclusive, impulsive, and perhaps creative. Positive moods also make people more compliant toward attempts at persuasion, at least under low involvement.

The contrast between affect and cognition has been hotly debated, leading to a proposal that they are separate systems with affect being primary. Evidence from mere exposure and person perception research is cited in support of this perspective; people report liking frequently encountered stimuli they cannot discriminate as familiar, and people's evaluative judgments are often made online, without recall for the data on which they were based. Objections to this perspective have focused on the possibility of nonconscious cognitive processes, the role of affect within broader (cognitive) representational systems, the problems of defining both affect and cognition, and empirical tests of the differences. The most constructive course seems to be to examine the bases of each and to investigate the multiple ways in which they do relate, as reviewed here.