

## Chapter 5: Self in Social Cognition

1. Contrast explicit and implicit self-esteem. Describe an outcome of having high-explicit but low-implicit self-esteem. Why does that outcome emerge?
  - a) Explicit self-esteem is the evaluation of oneself that one will consciously report. Implicit self-esteem is a measure of one's indirect indicators of self-value.
  - b) Someone with high-explicit but low-implicit self-esteem is prone to behaving defensively (Jordan, Spencer, & Zanna, 2003). This person's self-views are fragile and require continual reinforcement, so they behave defensively to maintain their self-esteem.
2. What is the independent self and the interdependent self?
  - a) The independent self sees the self as a unique, autonomous, agentic, bounded, coherent whole, contrasting with other individuals and with the context.
  - b) The interdependent self sees oneself as part of encompassing social relationships and adjusts one's behavior to what one perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship.
3. Describe the behavioral activation system (BAS) and the behavioral inhibition system (BIS). What general behaviors do each promote? Which brain areas do each activate?
  - a) The behavioral activation system (BAS) is an appetitive system, promoting approach-oriented, rewarding goals. This is associated with left-frontal activation.
  - b) The behavioral inhibition system (BIS) is an aversive system, preventing negative outcomes by avoiding action. This is associated with right-frontal activation.
4. Describe the four motivations for self-regulation. Categorize them under relevant motives from the bucket of motives described in Chapter 2.
  - a) Four motivations for self-regulation include:
    - The need for an accurate sense of self, which involves getting an accurate assessment of our abilities, beliefs, and emotions. From the bucket, this would fall under the "understanding" motive.
    - The need for a consistent sense of self involves our need to believe that we have intrinsic qualities and goals that are relatively stable. This would also fall under the "understanding" motive.
    - The need for an improving self derives from our desire to do and be better. This would fall under the "enhancing self" motive.
    - The need to have a positive sense of self arises because we want to maintain self-esteem and feel good about ourselves. This falls under the "enhancing self" motive, as well.

5. Describe at least three benefits of self-enhancement.

- a) Self-enhancement may be adaptive for mental health. We feel better about ourselves when we self-enhance; develop motivation to pursue goals; and persist longer in trying to achieve or goals.
- b) Self-enhancement fosters evidence of successful life adjustment: a personal sense of well-being, persistence toward goals, and the ability to engage in creative, productive work.
- c) Self-enhancing fosters social relationships as long as one's self-enhancement doesn't become alienating.
- d) Self-enhancing leads to better feedback response: we are more receptive to negative feedback, are less defensive, and are more positive to other people.
- e) Biologically, self-enhancement lowers cortisol (stress hormone) levels, lowers heart rate, and lowers blood pressure when put under stress.

6. In your own words, describe the self-evaluation maintenance theory. Give examples to explain the comparison and reflection effects.

- a) This theory explains how people facilitate and maintain their positive self-regard when faced with the performance of people around them to whom they might compare themselves. Let's use the example of two friends, Roxanne and Ana, to illustrate the comparison and reflection effects encompassed in this theory.
- b) In the first case, Roxanne and Ana are both players on a basketball team. Roxanne is looking to perform well in a game where several recruiters will be in the crowd. Instead, she buckles, scoring only 5 points where Ana scores 40 points by the end of the game. Feeling that Ana is probably going to get recruited over her, Roxanne feels jealous and angry and avoids Ana for the rest of the season. This illustrates the *comparison effect*.
- c) In the second case, Roxanne is a soccer player and Ana is a basketball player. After Ana scores 40 points in a decisive game for the team, Roxanne is proud of Ana, telling others about how well she played, and taking part in all the celebrations after as a close friend. This illustrates the *reflection effect*.