



CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY

People hold complex and varied representations of themselves, including both their current attributes and attributes that may characterize them in the future. The self-concept varies depending on one's situation, temporarily altering the working self-concept; the relational self-concept also represents significant others. Beliefs about one's current and future qualities act as reference points for setting goals and guiding behavior. Self-esteem is the explicit and implicit valuation of self.

Self-concepts and the cognitions, emotions, and goals that accompany them vary by cultural context. Whereas the independent self, characteristic of Western cultures, reflects a conception of self as autonomous and self-serving, the interdependent self reflects a self-concept interconnected with the social group and influenced substantially by its standards. These differences affect self-regulatory motives and processes.

Self-regulation refers to people controlling their actions, partly influenced by holding a promotion or a prevention focus with respect to personal goals. In attention directed inward toward self or outward toward the environment, generally self-focus increases the correspondence between behavior and salient standards. Self-regulatory behavior may be either self-consciously activated or automatically pursued.

Self-regulation is guided by underlying motivational processes, overarching goals such as need for accuracy, need for a consistent sense of self, desire to improve, and self-enhancement. Each motive affects behavior under different circumstances.

Self-beliefs influence the accessibility of constructs used for judging others. Under neutral circumstances, a person may use personal beliefs and characteristics as a basis for inferring the qualities of others. But conditions of personal threat potentiate social projection processes, ranging from assuming one's weaknesses are widely shared to stereotyping vulnerable social groups.