

Viking Quest: Psychology Assignments

February 2015

Week: Feb. 17th -20th

- *Read Chapter 18-1, 18-2*
- *Create an outline/Cornell/or other form of note taking guide for the section.*
- *Complete pg. 515 # 1-3, Pg. 525 # 1-5, pg. 526 #1-3*
- *Complete Study Guide Handouts*

Study Guide 18-1

Interpersonal Attraction

For use with textbook pages 519–525

Key Terms

social psychology seeks to explain how our thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors are influenced by interactions with others (page 519)

social cognition focuses on how we perceive, store, and retrieve information about social interactions (page 519)

physical proximity the distance of one person to another (page 522)

stimulation value the ability of a person to interest you in or to expose you to new ideas and experiences (page 523)

utility value the ability of a person to help another achieve his or her goals (page 523)

ego-support value the ability of a person to provide another person with sympathy, encouragement, and approval (page 523)

complementarity the attraction that often develops between opposite types of people because of the ability of one to supply what the other lacks (page 525)

Drawing From Experience

Think about your closest friends. Are they like you in many ways? Do you live close to each other and participate in many of the same activities? What do you like about them?

In this section, you will learn about why friends are important. You will also learn some reasons why we choose the friends we do.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about the rewards people get from friendships. List the three rewards below and give an example of each.

Rewards of Friendship	Examples
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Read to Learn

Introduction (page 519)

People need to interact with other people. That is, we need to talk to and do things with other people. **Social psychology** is the study of how our interactions with others influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Every day we make judgments about others based on who we think they are. When we interact with them, we must adjust our judgments to explain their behavior and ours. **Social cognition** is the study of how we perceive, store, and retrieve information about our interactions with others.

7. What do you think life would be like if you lived on an island by yourself?
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Why You Need Friends (page 520)

As infants, we depend on others to meet our needs. Later, we seek personal contact for the same reason, even though we can care for ourselves. We have developed needs for praise, respect, love, the sense of achievement, and other rewarding experiences. Only other human beings can satisfy these needs.

Social psychologists have found that we need company most when we are afraid or anxious. Stanley Schachter designed an experiment to test the old saying "Misery loves company." He arranged to have college women come to his laboratory. He told one group that they would receive painful shocks to study the effect of electricity on the body. This produced high anxiety in that group. He told the other group that the shocks would produce a tingling feeling that they might even find pleasant. He told both groups to wait. He handed out a questionnaire that asked each woman if she would like to wait alone or with others. Most of the high-anxiety group chose to wait with others. Most of the low-anxiety group chose to wait alone. This experiment showed that high anxiety produces a need to be around others.

We also need company when we are unsure of ourselves and want to compare feelings or performance with others. For example, when you get tests back, you probably ask your friends how they did. Many people evaluate themselves based on how well they performed compared to others. In a similar experiment, Schachter made all the women anxious. Then he gave one group the choice of waiting alone or with others taking part in the same experiment. He gave the other group the chance to wait alone or in a room where students were waiting to see their advisers. The women who had the chance to be with others in the same difficult situation grabbed the chance. Most in the other group chose to wait alone rather than with unconcerned students.

Friends offer support in trying times. You can bounce ideas off them. They can act as a go-between when you have problems with other people. However, predicting the effects of friendships can be complex. Studies show that friends can help reduce high stress. Yet friends do not help much with average stress. They may even make low levels of stress worse.

8. Think about a recent conversation with a friend. What were you actually doing for each other in the interaction?
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How You Choose Friends (page 522)

One of the most important things that determines whether two people will become friends is **physical proximity**. This is how close to each other the people live or work. Being close together provides opportunity to interact. Psychologists studied people living in a small apartment building. Even though everyone was close to everyone else, the residents were more likely to become friends with the person next door than with anyone else. Psychologists think this is a result of the fear of meeting strangers. When two people live next door, go to the same class, or work in the same place, they find reasons to talk to each other without risking rejection.

You get three kinds of rewards from friendship. One is stimulation. Friends have **stimulation value** if they are interesting and can introduce you to new ideas or experiences. Another reward is utility. Friends have **utility value** if they are willing to give you their time and resources to help you achieve your goals. For example, a friend may help you with your homework so you can pass the course. A third reward is ego support. Friends have **ego-support value** when they can give you sympathy and encouragement when things go badly and approval when things go well. You consciously or unconsciously evaluate these three rewards in every friendship. A woman may like a man because he values her opinions (ego-support value) and she enjoys his company (stimulation value).

Physical appearance also plays a role in our choice of friends. People feel better about themselves when they associate with people that others consider desirable. In one study, participants viewed more physically attractive people as having more positive personality traits than unattractive people. Psychologists found that physical appearance is less important in choosing a marriage partner or close friend than when inviting someone to the movies. Both men and women seek out others whom they consider their equal in attractiveness.

Approval also influences our choice of friends. We all like people who agree with us. Yet studies suggest that we choose friends who give a mix of praise and criticism rather than all of one or the other. We take people more seriously if they see both sides.

We tend to choose friends whose backgrounds, attitudes, and interests are like ours. There are several explanations for this. First, agreement on what is exciting, worthwhile, and fun provides the opportunity for shared activities. Second, we feel uneasy around people who are constantly challenging our views. Third, people who agree on things find it easier to communicate.

Sometimes opposites attract because one person can supply something the other lacks. This is called **complementarity**. Still, being more alike than different seems to be more important to friendship.

9. Why do we seek friendships with people more like us rather than different from us?
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Study Guide 18-2

Social Perception

For use with textbook pages 527–532

Key Terms

primacy effect the tendency to form opinions on others based on first impressions (page 528)

stereotype a set of assumptions about people in a given category often based on half-truths and nontruths (page 530)

attribution theory a collection of principles based on our explanations of the causes of events, other people's behaviors, and our own behaviors (page 530)

fundamental attribution error inclination to over attribute others' behavior to internal causes (dispositional factors) and discount the situational factors contributing to their behavior (situational factors) (page 531)

actor-observer bias tendency to attribute one's own behavior to outside causes but attribute the behavior of others to internal causes (page 531)

self-serving bias tendency to claim success is due to our efforts, while failure is due to circumstances beyond our control (page 531)

nonverbal communication the process of communication through the use of space, body language, and facial expression (page 531)

Drawing From Experience

Have you ever judged what a stranger is like after seeing that person across the room? How does this first impression cause you to act toward that person? In this section, you will learn how you form first impressions about people. You will also learn about how you attach meaning to your behavior and that of others.

Organizing Your Thoughts

Use the diagram below to help you take notes as you read the summaries that follow. Think about how you form first impressions of people. Give an example of each key word below.

Key Word	Example
primacy effect	1.
schema	2.
stereotype	3.

Read to Learn

Introduction (page 527)

We often make judgments about people from a brief conversation. Or, we may think we know what people are like from looking at them across the room. From these first impressions, we decide whether or not to get to know the person better. You might judge a stranger to be “boring.” Someone else might judge him to be “mysterious.” First impressions depend on the person making the judgment.

4. Describe a time when you formed a really negative first impression of someone. Then later you discovered that the person wasn’t like that at all.
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First Impressions (page 528)

The **primacy effect** is the tendency to form opinions of others based on first impressions. For example, a researcher invited a guest speaker to class. Before the lecture, students were given descriptions of the speaker. The descriptions were the same, except that some said the speaker was cold and the others said he was warm. After the lecture, students filled out evaluations. Students who were told the speaker was cold evaluated him as self-centered and without humor. Students who were told the speaker was warm described him as friendly and concerned. The change in one adjective in the description made a big difference in the way the students perceived the speaker.

First impressions can become self-fulfilling prophecies. That is, you act toward someone based on your first impression. This in turn affects how the person acts toward you. For example, you may have been in a bad mood the first day of class. You did not pay attention and made a few jokes. Your teacher labeled you a troublemaker. Then your teacher treated you like a troublemaker, so you lost interest in the class and stopped studying. In reality, you might be a great student who just had a bad day.

Forming impressions helps us put people into categories. The set of assumptions about a person or event is a *schema*. We develop a schema for every person we know. For example, your schema about intelligent people may be that they are active, motivated, and responsible. John’s schema about intelligent people may be that they are boring, big-headed, and unfriendly. You both meet someone who seems intelligent. You are impressed with the person’s enthusiasm as she talks about her work. John applies his schema and thinks the woman is boasting about her work. Schemas about people are judgments about their personality traits.

Sometimes we develop schemas for whole groups of people. You may have schemas for men, women, Asian Americans, African Americans, or certain religious groups. Such schemas are **stereotypes**. They are assumptions about a group of people based on half-truths or untrue information. The assumptions that males are independent and females are emotional are examples. Stereotypes can cause our first impressions to be prejudiced.

5. When you think of professional athletes, what descriptive words come to mind? These are part of your stereotype for this group of people.
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Attribution Theory (page 530)

You are waiting at a traffic light. Somebody behind you honks and motions frantically for you to get out of the way. Not sure what's happening, you move your car slowly over. You do not want him to think you are a pushover. The driver pulls even with you. He rolls down his window and says, "Thanks. My wife is in labor." Attribution theory is a set of principles about how we interpret other people's behavior. When you first heard the horn, you probably believed the man was a jerk. Attributing or relating a behavior to a personal characteristic is called *internal attribution*. After the man gave a good reason, you changed your conclusion. You attributed or related the behavior to an outside cause, the needs of the man's wife. This is called *external attribution*.

We often explain the cause of others' behavior as being inside them (internal attribution). We reject the external factors (external attribution) contributing to their behavior. This is **fundamental attribution error**. While we tend to focus on internal factors when explaining the behavior of others, we focus more on external factors when explaining our own behavior. This is **actor-observer bias**.

When there is glory to be claimed, we often show another form of error called a **self-serving bias**. In victory, we are quick to claim personal responsibility (internal attribution). In defeat, we blame events beyond our control (external attribution).

6. Suppose a softball player struck out three times in the game. Afterward she said, "That umpire wouldn't know a strike if it came with a label." What form of error would this person be displaying?
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Nonverbal Communication (page 531)

Communication requires a sender and a receiver. The message includes an idea plus an emotion. We can send messages verbally (with words). Or, we can send them as **nonverbal communication** (without words). We express nonverbal messages through body language, facial expressions, and use of space. For example, a friend says in a low voice, "It doesn't matter," and turns away. The nonverbal message is that his feelings are hurt. We often are not aware of the nonverbal messages we send. We are more aware of those we receive.

The way you carry your body communicates information about you. This is your *body language*. If you sit with your arms folded and legs crossed, you are protecting yourself. If you unfold your arms and stretch out, you are saying you are open to people. *Social rules* determine some body language, such as whom you can touch and where.

7. Describe the body language you see when you are having a disagreement with someone.