FOURTEENTH EDITION

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

NYLA R. BRANSCOMBE · ROBERT A. BARON

Pearson

Social Psychology

Fourteenth Edition

Nyla R. Branscombe
University of Kansas

Robert A. Baron
Oklahoma State University

Pearson

Harlow, England • London • New York • Boston • San Francisco • Toronto • Sydney • Dubai • Singapore • Hong Kong
Tokyo • Seoul • Taipei • New Delhi • Cape Town • Sao Paulo • Mexico City • Madrid • Amsterdam • Munich • Paris • Milan

Dedication

To Phil Schlaman, my best friend and essential social support;
You make it all worthwhile.

—Nyla R. Branscombe

To the people I care about most and who care most about me—
Rebecca, Ted, Melissa, Samantha, Randy, Paul and Leah;
And to the colleagues who helped make my life's journey such a happy one—
Donn Byrne, Roger Black, Jim Naylor, John Capaldi, and Mike Morris

—Robert A. Baron

Brief Contents

1 Social Psychology 17

2 Social Cognition 54

3 Social Perception 89

4 The Self 123

5 Attitudes 161

6 Causes and Cures of Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination 200

7 Liking, Love, and Other Close Relationships 238

8 Social Influence 275

9 Prosocial Behavior 311

10 Aggression 339

11 Groups and Individuals 374

12 Dealing with Adversity and Achieving a Happy Life 414

Contents

Preface 10
Acknowledgements 15
About the Authors 16

1 Social Psychology

The Science of the Social Side of Life 17

1.1: Social Psychology: What It Is and Is Not 20
- 1.1.1: Social Psychology Is Scientific in Nature 21
- 1.1.2: Social Psychology Focuses on the Behavior of Individuals 24
- 1.1.3: Social Psychology Seeks to Understand the Causes of Social Behavior 25
- 1.1.4: The Search for Basic Principles in a Changing Social World 28

1.2: Social Psychology: Advances at the Boundaries 30
- 1.2.1: Cognition and Behavior: Two Sides of the Same Social Coin 31
- 1.2.2: The Role of Emotion in the Social Side of Life 31
- 1.2.3: Social Relationships: How Important They Are for Well-Being 31
- 1.2.4: Social Neuroscience: The Intersection of Social Psychology and Brain Research 33
- 1.2.5: The Role of Implicit (Nonconscious) Processes 36
- 1.2.6: Taking Full Account of Social Diversity 37

1.3: How Social Psychologists Answer the Questions They Ask: Research as the Route to Increased Knowledge 38
- 1.3.1: Systematic Observation: Describing the World Around Us 38
- 1.3.2: Correlation: The Search for Relationships 40
- 1.3.3: The Experimental Method: Knowledge Through Systematic Intervention 42
- 1.3.4: Further Thoughts on Causality: The Role of Mediating Variables 46
- 1.3.5: Meta-Analysis: Assessing a Body of Knowledge 46

1.4: The Role of Theory in Social Psychology 47

1.5: The Quest for Knowledge and the Rights of Individuals: Seeking an Appropriate Balance 49

1.6: Getting the Most Out of This Book: A User's Guide 52

Summary and Review 52

2 Social Cognition

How We Think About the Social World 54

2.1: Heuristics: How We Employ Simple Rules in Social Cognition 57
- 2.1.1: Representativeness: Judging by Resemblance 58
- 2.1.2: Availability: "If I Can Recall Many Instances, They Must Be Frequent?" 59
- 2.1.3: Anchoring and Adjustment: Where You Begin Makes a Difference 61
- 2.1.4: Status Quo Heuristic: "What Is, Is Good" 63

What Research Tells Us About… People's Preference for the Status Quo 64

2.2: Schemas: Mental Frameworks for Organizing Social Information 65
- 2.2.1: The Impact of Schemas on Social Cognition: Attention, Encoding, Retrieval 66
- 2.2.2: Priming: Which Schema Guides Our Thought? 66
- 2.2.3: Schema Persistence: Why Even Discredited Schemas Can Influence Thought and Behavior 67
- 2.2.4: Reasoning by Metaphor: How Social Attitudes and Behavior Are Affected by Figures of Speech 68

2.3: Automatic and Controlled Processing in Social Thought 70
- 2.3.1: Automatic Processing and Automatic Social Behavior 71
- 2.3.2: Benefits of Automatic Processing: Beyond Mere Efficiency 72

2.4: Potential Sources of Error in Social Cognition: Why Total Rationality Is Rarer Than You Think 73
- 2.4.1: Our Powerful Tendency to Be Overly Optimistic 74
- 2.4.2: Situation-Specific Sources of Error in Social Cognition: Counterfactual Thinking and Magical Thinking 78

2.5: Affect and Cognition: How Feelings Shape Thought and Thought Shapes Feelings 81
- 2.5.1: The Influence of Affect on Cognition 82
- 2.5.2: The Influence of Cognition on Affect 83
- 2.5.3: Affect and Cognition: Social Neuroscience Evidence for Two Separate Systems 85

What Research Tells Us About… Why Not Controlling Ourselves Can Make Us Feel Good 86

Summary and Review 87

3 Social Perception

Seeking to Understand Others 89

3.1: Nonverbal Communication: An Unspoken Language 91
- 3.1.1: Basic Channels of Nonverbal Communication 92
- 3.1.2: Nonverbal Cues in Social Life 96
- 3.1.3: Recognizing Deception 98

What Research Tells Us About… The Role of Nonverbal Cues in Job Interviews 102
3.2: Attribution: Understanding the Causes of Behavior 103
3.2.1: Theories of Attribution: How We Attempt to Make Sense of the Social World 103
3.2.2: Basic Sources of Error in Attribution 108
What Research Tells Us About… Why Some People Conclude They Are Superior to Others 112
3.2.3: Applications of Attribution Theory: Interventions and Insights 113
3.3: Impression Formation and Management: Combining Information About Others 115
3.3.1: Impression Formation 116
3.3.2: Impression Management 119
Summary and Review 121

4 The Self
Answering the Question "Who Am I?" 123

4.1: Self-Presentation: Managing the Self in Different Social Contexts 125
4.1.1: Self–Other Accuracy in Predicting Our Behavior 126
4.1.2: Self-Presentation Tactics 128
4.2: Self-Knowledge: Determining Who We Are 130
4.2.1: Introspection: Looking Inward to Discover the Causes of Our Own Behavior 130
4.2.2: The Self from the Observer's Standpoint 132
4.3: Personal Identity Versus Social Identity 133
4.3.1: Who I Think I Am Depends on the Social Context 135
4.3.2: Who I Am Depends on Others' Treatment 138
What Research Tells Us About… The Importance of Belonging and Group Ties 140
4.3.3: The Self Across Time: Past and Future Selves 141
4.3.4: Why Self-Control Can Be Difficult to Achieve 141
4.4: Social Comparison: How We Evaluate Ourselves 143
4.4.1: Self-Serving Biases and Unrealistic Optimism 146
4.5: Self-Esteem: Attitudes Toward Ourselves 147
4.5.1: The Measurement of Self-Esteem 148
4.5.2: How Migration Affects Self-Esteem 150
4.5.3: Do Women and Men Differ in Their Level of Self-Esteem? 152
What Research Tells Us About… Perceived Discrimination and Self-Esteem 153
4.6: The Self as a Target of Prejudice 154
4.6.1: Concealing Our Identity: How Well-Being Can Suffer 155
4.6.2: Overcoming the Effects of Stereotype Threat 156
Summary and Review 159

5 Attitudes
Evaluating and Responding to the Social World 161

5.1: Attitude Formation: How Attitudes Develop 168
5.1.1: Classical Conditioning: Learning Based on Association 168
5.1.2: Instrumental Conditioning: Rewards for the "Right" Views 170
5.1.3: Observational Learning: Learning by Exposure to Others 172
What Research Tells Us About… Social Modeling and Eating 173
5.2: When and Why Do Attitudes Influence Behavior? 174
5.2.1: Role of the Social Context in the Link Between Attitudes and Behavior 175
5.2.2: Strength of Attitudes 176
5.2.3: Attitude Extremity: Role of Vested Interests 176
5.2.4: Attitude Certainty: Importance of Clarity and Correctness 178
5.2.5: Role of Personal Experience 179
5.3: How Do Attitudes Guide Behavior? 180
5.3.1: Attitudes Arrived at Through Reasoned Thought 180
5.3.2: Attitudes and Spontaneous Behavioral Reactions 181
5.4: The Science of Persuasion: How Attitudes Are Changed 182
5.4.1: Persuasion: Communicators, Messages, and Audiences 183
5.4.2: The Cognitive Processes Underlying Persuasion 186
5.5: Resisting Persuasion Attempts 189
5.5.1: Reactance: Protecting Our Personal Freedom 189
5.5.2: Forewarning: Prior Knowledge of Persuasive Intent 189
5.5.3: Selective Avoidance of Persuasion Attempts 190
5.5.4: Actively Defending Our Attitudes: Counterarguing Against the Competition 190
5.5.5: Individual Differences in Resistance to Persuasion 191
5.5.6: Ego-Depletion Can Undermine Resistance 191
5.6: Cognitive Dissonance: What Is It and How Do We Manage It? 193
5.6.1: Dissonance and Attitude Change: The Effects of Induced Compliance 193
5.6.2: Alternative Strategies for Resolving Dissonance 194
5.6.3: When Dissonance Is a Tool for Beneficial Changes in Behavior 195
What Research Tells Us About… Culture and Attitude Processes 197
Summary and Review 198

6 Causes and Cures of Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination 200

6.1: How Members of Different Groups Perceive Inequality 203
What Research Tells Us About… Biases in Our Beliefs About Inequality 206
6.2: The Nature and Origins of Stereotyping 207

6.2.1: Stereotyping: Beliefs About Social Groups 208
6.2.2: Is Stereotyping Absent If Members of Different Groups Are Rated the Same? 213
6.2.3: Can We Be Victims of Stereotyping and Not Even Recognize It: The Case of Single People 215
6.2.4: Why Do People Form and Use Stereotypes? 216
6.3: Prejudice: Feelings Toward Social Groups 218
6.3.1: The Origins of Prejudice: Contrasting Perspectives 221
What Research Tells Us About… The Role of Existential Threat in Prejudice 226
6.4: Discrimination: Prejudice in Action 227
6.4.1: Modern Racism: More Subtle, but Just as Harmful 227
6.5: Why Prejudice Is Not Inevitable: Techniques for Countering Its Effects 231
6.5.1: On Learning Not to Hate 231
6.5.2: The Potential Benefits of Contact 231
6.5.3: Recategorization: Changing the Boundaries 232
6.5.4: The Benefits of Guilt for Prejudice Reduction 233
6.5.5: Can We Learn to "Just Say No" to Stereotyping and Biased Attributions? 233
6.5.6: Social Influence as a Means of Reducing Prejudice 235
Summary and Review 236

7 Liking, Love, and Other Close Relationships 238

7.1: Internal Sources of Liking Others: The Role of Needs and Emotions 240
7.1.1: The Importance of Affiliation in Human Existence: The Need to Belong 241
7.1.2: The Role of Affect: Do Our Moods Play a Role in Liking Others? 243
7.2: External Sources of Attraction: The Effects of Proximity, Familiarity, and Physical Beauty 245
7.2.1: The Power of Proximity: Unplanned Contacts 245
7.2.2: Physical Beauty: Its Role in Interpersonal Attraction 247
What Research Tells Us About… Dramatic Differences in Appearance Between Partners: Is Love Really Blind? 252
7.3: Sources of Liking Based on Social Interaction 254
7.3.1: Similarity: Birds of a Feather Actually Do Flock Together 254
7.3.2: Reciprocal Liking or Disliking: Liking Those Who Like Us 258
7.3.3: Social Skills: Liking People Who Are Good at Interacting with Others 258
7.3.4: Personality and Liking: Why People with Certain Traits Are More Attractive Than Others 260
7.3.5: What Do We Desire in Others? Gender Differences and Changes over Stages of a Relationship 261
7.4: Close Relationships: Foundations of Social Life 263
7.4.1: Romantic Relationships and the (Partially Solved) Mystery of Love 263
7.4.2: What Do We Seek in Romantic Partners? 266
What Research Tells Us About… Two Factors That May Destroy Love—Jealousy and Infidelity 267
7.4.3: Relationships with Family Members: Our First—and Most Lasting—Close Relationships 269
7.4.4: Friendships: Relationships Beyond the Family 271
Summary and Review 274

8 Social Influence

Changing Others' Behavior 275

8.1: Conformity: How Groups—and Norms—Influence Our Behavior 278
8.1.1: Social Pressure: The Irresistible Force? 279
What Research Tells Us About… How Much We Really Conform 281
8.1.2: How Social Norms Emerge 282
8.1.3: Factors Affecting Conformity 282
8.1.4: Social Foundations of Conformity: Why We Often Choose to "Go Along" 285
8.1.5: The Downside of Conformity 285
8.1.6: Reasons for Nonconformity: Why We Sometimes Choose "Not to Go Along" 288
8.1.7: Minority Influence: Does the Majority Always Rule? 292
8.2: Compliance: To Ask—Sometimes—Is to Receive 294
8.2.1: The Underlying Principles of Compliance 294
8.2.2: Tactics Based on Friendship or Liking 295
8.2.3: Tactics Based on Commitment or Consistency 296
8.2.4: Tactics Based on Reciprocity 297
8.2.5: Tactics Based on Scarcity 298
8.2.6: Do Compliance Tactics Work? 298
What Research Tells Us About… Using Scarcity to Gain Compliance 299
8.3: Obedience to Authority: Would You Harm Someone If Ordered to Do So? 300
8.3.1: Obedience in the Laboratory 300
8.3.2: Why Destructive Obedience Occurs 303
8.3.3: Resisting the Effects of Destructive Obedience 304
8.4: Unintentional Social Influence: How Others Change Our Behavior Even When They Are Not Trying to Do So 305
8.4.1: Emotional Contagion 305
8.4.2: Symbolic Social Influence 307
8.4.3: Modeling: Learning from Observing Others 308
Summary and Review 309

9 Prosocial Behavior

Helping Others 311

9.1: Why People Help: Motives for Prosocial Behavior 313
9.1.1: Empathy-Altruism: It Feels Good to Help Others 313

9.1.2: Negative-State Relief: Helping Can Reduce Unpleasant Feelings 315
9.1.3: Empathic Joy: Feeling Good by Helping Others 315
9.1.4: Competitive Altruism: Why Nice People Sometimes Finish First 316
9.1.5: Kin Selection Theory 317
9.1.6: Defensive Helping: Helping Outgroups to Reduce Their Threat to Our Ingroup 318
9.2: Responding to an Emergency: Will Bystanders Help? 319
9.2.1: Helping in Emergencies: Apathy—or Action? 320
9.2.2: Is There Safety in Numbers? Sometimes, but Not Always 320
9.2.3: Key Steps in Deciding to Help—Or Not 321
9.3: Factors That Increase or Decrease the Tendency to Help 325
9.3.1: Factors That Increase Prosocial Behavior 325
9.3.2: Factors That Reduce Helping 328
What Research Tells Us About… Paying It Forward: Helping Others Because We Have Been Helped 329
What Research Tells Us About… How People React to Being Helped 332
9.4: Crowdfunding: A New Type of Prosocial Behavior 333
9.4.1: Emotion and Prosocial Behavior: Mood, Feelings of Elevation, and Helping 334
9.4.2: Gender and Prosocial Behavior: Do Women and Men Differ? 335
9.5: Final Thoughts: Are Prosocial Behavior and Aggression Opposites? 336
Summary and Review 338

10 Aggression
Its Nature, Causes, and Control 339

10.1: Perspectives on Aggression: In Search of the Roots of Violence 342
10.1.1: The Role of Biological Factors: Are We Programmed for Violence? 342
10.1.2: Drive Theories: The Motive to Harm Others 344
10.1.3: Modern Theories of Aggression 345
10.2: Causes of Human Aggression: Social, Cultural, Personal, and Situational 347
10.2.1: Basic Sources of Aggression: Frustration and Provocation 347
What Research Tells Us About… The Role of Emotions in Aggression 349
10.2.2: Social Causes of Aggression 350
10.2.3: Why Some People Are More Aggressive Than Others 355
10.2.4: Gender and Aggression: Are Men More Aggressive Than Women? 357
10.2.5: Situational Determinants of Aggression: The Effects of Heat, Alcohol, and Gun Availability 358
10.3: Aggression in the Classroom and Workplace 362
10.3.1: What Is Bullying? 362
10.3.2: Cyberbullying: Electronic Means of Harm Doing 364
10.3.3: Can Bullying Be Reduced? 364
What Research Tells Us About… Workplace Aggression 366
10.4: The Prevention and Control of Aggression: Some Useful Techniques 367
10.4.1: Punishment: Revenge or Deterrence? 367
10.4.2: Self-Regulation: Internal Mechanisms for Restraining Aggression 369
10.4.3: Catharsis: Does "Blowing Off Steam" Really Help? 370
10.4.4: Reducing Aggression by Thinking Nonaggressive Thoughts 371
Summary and Review 372

11 Groups and Individuals
The Consequences of Belonging 374

11.1: Groups: When We Join … and When We Leave 377
11.1.1: Groups: Their Key Components 379
11.1.2: The Benefits—and Costs—of Joining 384
What Research Tells Us About… Dissent and Criticism of Our Groups—"Because We Care" 388
11.2: Effects of the Presence of Others: From Task Performance to Behavior in Crowds 390
11.2.1: Social Facilitation: Performing in the Presence of Others 390
11.2.2: Social Loafing: Letting Others Do the Work 393
11.2.3: Effects of Being in a Crowd 394
11.3: Coordination in Groups: Cooperation or Conflict? 396
11.3.1: Cooperation: Working with Others to Achieve Shared Goals 397
11.3.2: Responding to and Resolving Conflicts 399
11.4: Perceived Fairness in Groups: Its Nature and Effects 402
11.4.1: Rules for Judging Fairness: Distributive, Procedural, and Transactional Justice 402
What Research Tells Us About… The Importance of Being Treated with Respect 403
11.5: Decision Making by Groups: How It Occurs and the Pitfalls It Faces 405
11.5.1: The Decision-Making Process: How Groups Attain Consensus 405
11.5.2: The Downside of Group Decision Making 406
11.6: The Role of Leadership in Group Settings 409
Summary and Review 412

12 Dealing with Adversity and Achieving a Happy Life 414

12.1: Social Sources of Stress and Their Effects on Personal Well-Being 416
12.1.1: The Impact of Social Relationships on Health 416

12.1.2: How Self-Views Affect Outcomes 420
12.1.3: The Struggle to "Belong" 422
12.2: Social Tactics for Decreasing the Harmful Effects of Stress 424
12.2.1: Using Social Groups to Improve Health 424
12.2.2: Social Identification as a Means for Managing Stress 425
12.2.3: Accepting Ourselves 426
What Research Tells Us About… Reducing Post-Traumatic Stress Among Veterans 427
12.3: Making the Legal System More Fair and Effective 430
12.3.1: Social Influence in the Legal Process 430
12.3.2: The Influence of Prejudice and Stereotypes in the Legal System 434
12.4: Fostering Happiness in Our Lives 438
12.4.1: How Happy Are People, in General? 438
12.4.2: Factors That Influence Happiness 439
12.4.3: Does Monetary Wealth Create Happiness? 439
12.4.4: Is Happiness Getting What You Want or Enjoying What You Have? 441
12.4.5: Differences Between Happy and Unhappy People 441
What Research Tells Us About… The Relationship Between Emotions and Life Satisfaction Within Different Cultures 443
12.4.6: Benefits of Happiness 444
12.4.7: Is It Possible to Be Too Happy? 445
12.4.8: Increasing Happiness Levels 446
12.4.9: Entrepreneurship as a Means of Seeking Happiness 448
Summary and Review 451

Glossary 453
References 460
Credits 497
Name Index 501
Subject Index 516

Preface

Social Psychology in a Changing World

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

–Quote by Nelson Mandela

"As we go forward, I hope we're going to continue to use technology to make really big differences in how people live and work."

–Quote by Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google

"Psychology cannot tell people how they ought to live their lives. It can, however, provide them with the means for effecting personal and social change."

–Quote by Albert Bandura

The aims identified in these quotations are truly impressive ones, and we most assuredly share their faith in the transformative power of education. We agree that equipping people with new ways of understanding themselves and interacting with the world has far-reaching consequences. And—more importantly—we believe that social psychology does provide powerful means of comprehending why people think, feel, and act as they do, and these ideas, in turn, illuminate how the social world shapes who we are and the processes by which we can achieve change, in ourselves and the social world. As you know, the goal of changing the world through technology, at least in terms of its implications for how we interact with other people and access our accumulated knowledge, has in fact been met—to "google" something has become a verb in everyday language, and Facebook and other social media have changed much about how we interact with each other. Just try to imagine life without the many forms of social media we use practically every hour of every day. Probably you cannot because digital technology has become woven into the very fabric of our lives so that we take them for granted and use them as though they are extensions of ourselves. While the founders of Google and Facebook sought to change how people interact with the world, social psychologists seek to illuminate the many "hidden processes" that shape how people influence each other. By providing you with a comprehensive overview of social psychological theory and research, we believe the information in this book offers you a valuable means of learning about yourself and the social world in which we live.

The social world, which is the primary focus of this book, has changed tremendously in recent years, perhaps more quickly and dramatically than at any time in the past. That includes how we interact with each other, and a key point we will emphasize throughout the book is this: These changes have important implications for how we think about ourselves and other people. *Social psychology* is the branch of psychology that studies all aspects of our behavior with and toward others, our feelings and thoughts about them, and the relationships we develop with them. The central message for social psychology as a field, and for any book that seeks to represent it, is simple: Keep up with these technological changes in terms of their implications for social life, and this is precisely what we do with this 14th edition.

We are happy to report that social psychology provides many important insights crucial to understanding the social changes we have described thus far and can provide you with the means of understanding how to create further—and beneficial—social change. The field continues to be the vibrant and adaptable one it has always been and, we predict, always will be. The scope of social psychological research (and knowledge acquired) has expanded rapidly in the past few years—in fact, much has been learned since the publication of the previous edition of this book—and this new edition fully reflects the many changes now occurring all over the world.

Our central goal for this new edition was to illustrate just how well our field has—and does—adjust to and reflect the changing social world. Technology is not simply changing the way we carry out certain tasks: It is also changing the way we live and—most important—how we interact with each other. Although many basic principles of social life remain, in essence, unchanged—for instance, the nature of love, hate, and emotions in-between—the ways in which these principles are *expressed* and *experienced* have changed drastically.

So, how, precisely, did we set out to reflect these major trends while fully and accurately describing the core of our field—the knowledge and insights that social psychologists have gathered through decades of systematic research? As the 2015 *White House Social and Behavioral Sciences Team Report* indicates, social psychological research consists of an impressive body of knowledge about how people actually think, feel, and behave toward other people, and the

accumulated knowledge identifies how changing social conditions can influence those responses, often with an eye to improving life for us all. Indeed, social psychological research has taught us much about the "human animal" that can and is being fruitfully applied in numerous domains. That is precisely what we aimed to do with this edition—illustrate how understanding social psychological processes can help to improve many aspects of life. The following is a summary of the major steps we took to accomplish these important goals.

Changes in Content

An Entirely Revamped Chapter Based on "the Science of Happiness"

Dealing with Adversity and Achieving a Happy Life (Chapter 12)

This capstone chapter is ambitious and entirely consistent with the theme of the 14th edition: *Education for achieving change*. We believe that social psychology can help *you* deal with the stresses of life and serve to guide you on the way toward achieving greater happiness. That's a tall order, but our field can indeed now provide the central ingredients for thinking about ourselves in ways that can help us be resilient when we enter new social environments and provide insight with specific strategies that, when put into practice, will improve people's well-being. Here's what you can learn from this greatly revised chapter (Chapter 12):

> *Can people be too happy? What roles do culture and age play in defining the meaning of happiness? What do we know about how the happiness of people in different nations can be improved? And, what can we do to make ourselves happier individuals and satisfied with what we have and the choices we have made? In short, this chapter describes social psychological knowledge that can help you in your quest to build the happy and fulfilling life we all seek.*

In other words, in this chapter we provide an overview of some of the important ways in which social psychology—with its scientific approach to personal and social change—can help us attain our key goals. Perhaps most important of all—we examine strategies people can use to handle the setbacks they may experience and reveal the ingredients for increasing happiness. Some of the questions we will consider are: What roles do culture and age play in defining the meaning of happiness? What do we know about how the happiness of people in different nations can be improved? And, how do we turn adversity into strength and achievement? This chapter describes what social psychologists, with their comprehensive approach to understanding social life, have discovered, and this knowledge can help *you* in your quest to build the happy and fulfilling life we all seek. We think that some of the findings we will present are indeed surprising—for instance, the fact that increasing wealth does not necessarily make people happier, but investing in social relationships does indeed make people happier. We believe that this is a unique and important aspect of this text and one that is fully consistent with the practical credo that social psychology, as a field, has always embraced.

Changes in Content Within Each of the Chapters

Continuing a long tradition in which each edition of this textbook has included literally dozens of new topics, this 14th edition is indeed "new." In every chapter, we present new lines of research, new findings, and new theoretical perspectives. Here is a partial list of the new topics included:

Chapter 1

- An increased emphasis on the importance of social relationships for psychological well-being.
- An entirely new section on the importance of meta-analysis in assessing an existing body of knowledge on a topic.
- A new emphasis on how cultural factors shape our conceptions of the self and how that in turn affects individuals' comfort and ability to navigate different social settings.

Chapter 2

- A new section on heuristic use under conditions of economic threat.
- A new section on the "portion size effect" and how eating can reflect inadequate adjustment from a high anchor.
- New research on belief in free will and its implications for counterfactual thinking.

Chapter 3

- A new section on why we find it difficult to recognize deception in others.
- A new discussion of attributions and terrorism—how perpetrators explain their actions.
- New research on how first impressions are revised over time.

Chapter 4

- An entirely new section addresses how trying to conceal our identity can inhibit social interaction and harm well-being.
- New research addresses why introspection fails, and particularly why people apparently don't know that spending their money on others can make them happier than spending it on themselves.
- An entirely new section on how migration affects self-esteem—both international and domestic moves by students.

Chapter 5

- New research concerning the role of reactance in students' responses to instructor behaviors in the classroom.
- New research addressing how attitudes can be conditioned nonconsciously.
- New research examining when people's behavior reflects their abstract values and when it is based on their economic self-interests.

Chapter 6

- New coverage of how racial group membership affects responses to issues concerning police treatment of citizens.
- New research concerning how groups maintain a favorable view of themselves, despite treating other groups in a prejudicial fashion.
- New research illustrating how stereotypes create gender-based disparities in the workplace.

Chapter 7

- A new section on social skills—our ability to get along with others—and their importance in many aspects of social life.
- A new discussion of how even trivial similarities to others (e.g., sharing the same first names) can increase liking for them.
- New information concerning the attributes that we look for in romantic partners change over the course of our relationships with them.

Chapter 8

- A new discussion of the potential benefits of refusing to "go along", or not yielding to social pressure.
- An expanded discussion of the effectiveness of various techniques (including several new ones) for gaining compliance from others—for getting other people to say "yes" to our requests.
- An entirely new section focused on unintentional social influence: How others influence us even when they are not trying to do so.

Chapter 9

- A new discussion of "crowd-funding"—a form of online helping in which individuals donate money to entrepreneurs without ever meeting them and without expecting anything in return.
- A new discussion of the role of social class in pro-social behavior.
- New findings concerning how feelings of anonymity (produced by darkness) can reduce willingness to help others.

Chapter 10

- New research concerning the role of genes in combination with exposure to stress affects aggression in children.
- A new section on the effects of narcissism on aggression has been included.
- A new section on situational factors that encourage aggressive behavior including gun availability.

Chapter 11

- New research concerning how groups create greater cohesion among their members when their distinctiveness is threatened.
- New research on how being part of a group helps people achieve a greater sense of control in their lives has been added.
- New research on distributive justice rules and how they vary across cultures was added.

Chapter 12

- This completely revamped capstone chapter offers a "social cure" perspective for managing the stresses in our lives and illustrates the critical role of social relationships for health, well-being, and achieving a meaningful life in a changing world.
- The importance of "believing we can change" for helping us weather adversity is described.
- Why practicing self-forgiveness following mistakes can help people change.

New Special Features with Research Insights on Cutting-Edge Topics

To fully reflect current trends in social psychological research and the field's responsiveness to social change, we now include two new special sections in each chapter—ones that were *not* present in the previous edition. These new sections, which are labeled "**What Research Tells Us**

About…," integrate important new research that will capture students' attention and excite their interest in new emerging topics in social psychology. Some examples are:

- A new research insights section on "People's Preference for the Status Quo."
- A new research insights section on "Why Not Controlling Ourselves Can Make Us Feel Good."
- A new research insights section on "The Role of Nonverbal Cues in Job Interviews."
- A new research insights section on "Why Some People Conclude They Are Superior to Others."
- A new research insights section on "The Importance of Belonging and Group Ties."
- A new research insights section on "Perceived Discrimination and Self-Esteem."
- A new research insights section on "Social Modeling and Eating."
- A new research insights section on "Culture and Attitude Processes."
- A new research insights section on "Biases in Our Beliefs About Inequality."
- A new research insights section on "The Role of Existential Threat in Prejudice."
- A new research insights section on "Dramatic Differences in Appearance Between Partners: Is Love Really Blind?"
- A new research insights section on "Two Factors That Can Destroy Love: Jealousy and Infidelity."
- A new research insights section on "How Much We Really Conform."
- A new research insights section on "Using Scarcity to Gain Compliance."
- A new research insights section on "Paying it Forward: Helping Others Because We Have Been Helped."
- A new research insights section on "How People React to Being Helped."
- A new research insights section on "The Role of Emotions in Aggression."
- A new research insights section on "Aggression in the Workplace."
- A new research insights section on "Dissent and Criticism of Our Groups—"Because We Care."
- A new research insights section on "The Importance of Being Treated With Respect."
- A new research insights section on "Reducing Posttraumatic Stress Among Veterans."
- A new research insights section on "The Relationship Between Emotions and Life Satisfaction Within Different Cultures."

Student Aids

Any textbook is valuable only to the extent that it is both useful and interesting to the students using it. To make this edition even better for students, we have included several student aids—features designed to enhance the book's appeal and usefulness. Included among these features are the following:

Chapter Objectives: The aims of each major chapter section are presented. With these, students should know what they will learn before they begin each chapter.

Chapter Openings Linked to Important Trends and Events in Society: All chapters begin with examples reflecting current trends in society or real-life events that illustrate important principles of social life. Here are some examples:

1. How people must make judgments—from what college to attend to what health insurance option to select—with incomplete information (Chapter 2)
2. How many famous people have deceived the public and why their deception was so difficult to detect (Chapter 3)
3. Facebook as a medium for presenting ourselves to others (Chapter 4)
4. How our beliefs about climate change are formed (Chapter 5)
5. How protest movements such as "Black Lives Matter" emerge and why there is a racial divide concerning police treatment of citizens (Chapter 6)
6. The powerful, practical advantages of being highly likable (Chapter 7)
7. How swindlers such as Bernie Madoff, who cheated investors out of billions, use social influence for selfish purposes (Chapter 8)
8. How more than 1.5 billion people have been helped to lead better lives by being provided with more efficient—and safer—cooking stoves (Chapter 9)
9. The goals of recent mass shooting perpetrators in the United States are compared with those committing aggression as part of a group to achieve political ends (Chapter 10)
10. The critical role of sharing an identity with an audience for effective communication in groups (Chapter 11)
11. How U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor overcame adversity to achieve a happy life (Chapter 12)

End-of-Chapter Summaries: Each chapter ends with a summary that recaps the key issues covered.

Special Labels on All Graphs and Charts: To make these easy to understand, we continue to use the "special labels" that are a unique feature of this book.

Supplementary Materials

All excellent texts are supported by a complete package of supplementary material, for both the students and the instructor. This text offers a full array of such aids including:

- **Instructor Manual:** includes chapter outlines, lecture launchers, key terms, in-class, and out-of-class activities.
- **PowerPoint Presentation:** provides a core template of the content covered throughout the text. Can easily be expanded for customization with your course.
- **Test Bank:** includes questions in multiple choice, fill-in-the blanks, short answer and essay response—formats.

Some Concluding Words

Looking back over the changes we have made for this 14th edition, we absolutely believe we have done everything possible to make this edition the best one yet! We sought to create a textbook that fully captures the extent to which modern social psychology reflects, and embraces, the major changes now occurring in the world and illustrate how those affect the social side of life. But only you—our colleagues and the students who use this textbook—can tell us to what extent we have succeeded. So please do send us your comments, reactions, and suggestions. As in the past, we will listen to them very carefully and do our best to use them constructively in planning the next edition.

Our warm regards and thanks!

Nyla R. Branscombe
Nyla@ku.edu

Robert A. Baron
Robert.baron@okstate.edu

Acknowledgements

Word of Thanks

No challenging endeavor, such as writing a textbook, is completed without the assistance of many people. Now that the hard work of preparing this new 14th edition is behind us, we want to take this opportunity to thank the many talented and dedicated people whose help throughout the process has been truly invaluable.

First, our sincere thanks to the colleagues who reviewed the 13th edition and offered their suggestions for ways in which it could be improved. Their input was invaluable to us in planning this new edition: Chris Goode, University of Kansas.

Second, we wish to offer our personal thanks to our editors at Pearson. It was a pleasure to work with Carly Czech and Sutapa Mukherjee. Their helpful suggestions and good judgment were matched only by their enthusiasm and support for the book.

Third, a special thanks to Lois-Ann Freier and Micah Newman whose keen eye and attention to detail during the revision process helped us make this text accurate and more interesting reading for students. Our thanks too go to Lumina Datamatics, Inc., for very careful and constructive copyediting. Their comments were insightful and thought-provoking, which were useful for improving and clarifying our words. We look forward to working with them for many years to come.

Fourth, a very special thanks is owed to Melissa Sacco at Lumina Datamatics who handled an incredible array of details and tasks with tremendous skill—and lots of patience with the authors! In addition, we thank all of those who contributed to various aspects of the production process: to Rimpy Sharma for photo research, to Lumina Datamatics for design work, and the cover design and to Saraswathi Muralidhar for her excellent help with the page proofs and other important aspects of the production process.

We also wish to offer our thanks to the many colleagues who provided reprints of their work, and to the many students who kindly shared their thoughts about the prior edition of this textbook with us. Although these individuals are too numerous to list here, a special note is due to Lara Aknin, Craig Anderson, Manuela Barreto, Monica Biernat, Chris Crandall, Scott Eidelman, Mark Ferguson, Omri Gillath, Alex Haslam, Cath Haslam, John Helliwell, Miles Hewstone, Jolanda Jetten, Anca Miron, Ludwin Molina, Masi Noor, Tom Postmes, Valerie Purdie-Vaughns, Kate Reynolds, Michelle Ryan, Michael Schmitt, Wolfgang Stroebe and Ruth Warner whose research input we gratefully acknowledge.

To all of these outstanding people, and many others too, our warmest regards and a huge thank you!

Nyla R. Branscombe & Robert A. Baron

For her contribution to the Global Edition, Pearson wishes to thank Pooja Thakur, and for their review of the new content, Pearson would like to thank Ashum Gupta; Manchong Limlunthang Zou, North Eastern Police Academy, Government of India; Anindita Chaudhuri, University of Calcutta; Bobby K. Cheon, Nanyang Technological University; Hongfei Du, University of Macau; and Albert Lee Kai Chung, Nanyang Technological University.

About the Authors

© 2013 University of Kansas

Nyla R. Branscombe is Professor of Psychology at University of Kansas. She received her B.A. from York University in Toronto, M.A. from the University of Western Ontario, and Ph.D. in 1986 from Purdue University. She has served as Associate Editor for *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, and *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. In 2015, she received the University of Kansas *Byron A Alexander Graduate Mentor Award.*

She has published more than 140 articles and chapters, has been twice the co-recipient of the Otto Kleinberg prize for research on Intercultural and International Relations, and twice the co-recipient of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology Publication Award. She co-edited the 2004 volume *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*, published by Cambridge University Press; the 2007 volume *Commemorating Brown: The Social Psychology of Racism and Discrimination,* published by the American Psychological Association; the 2010 volume *Rediscovering Social Identity,* published by Psychology Press; the 2013 volume *Handbook of Gender and Psychology,* published by Sage; and the 2015 volume *Psychology of Change: Life Contexts, Experiences, and Identities*.

Her current research addresses a variety of issues concerning intergroup relations from a social identity perspective. How people think about groups that have a history of victimization, when and why privileged groups may feel collective guilt for their past harm doing, and the consequences of experiencing discrimination for psychological well-being have been key topics investigated. She gratefully acknowledges ongoing research support from the *Canadian Institute for Advanced Research: Social Interactions, Identity, and Well-Being Program.*

© Rebecca A. Baron

Robert A. Baron is Regents Professor and the Spears Professor of Entrepreneurship at Oklahoma State University. He received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Iowa (1968). He has held faculty appointments at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Purdue University; the Universities of Minnesota, Texas, South Carolina, and Washington; Princeton University; and Oxford University. From 1979 to 1981, he was the Program Director for Social and Developmental Psychology at NSF. In 2001, he was appointed as a Visiting Senior Research Fellow by the French Ministry of Research (Universite de Toulouse).

He is a Fellow of APA and a Charter Fellow of APS. He has published more than 140 articles and 45 chapters and has authored/co-authored 49 books in psychology and management. He serves on the boards of several major journals and has received numerous awards for his research (e.g., "Thought Leader" award, Entrepreneurship Division, Academy of Management, 2009 the Grief award, for the most highly cited paper in the field of Entrepreneurship). He holds three U.S. patents and was founder and CEO of IEP, Inc. (1993–2000).

His current research interests focus on applying the findings and principles of social psychology to the field of entrepreneurship, where he has studied such topics as the role of perception in opportunity recognition, how entrepreneurs' social skills influence their success, and the role of positive affect in entrepreneurship.

Chapter 1
Social Psychology
The Science of the Social Side of Life

Chapter Overview

Social Psychology: What It Is and Is Not
- Social Psychology Is Scientific in Nature
- Social Psychology Focuses on the Behavior of Individuals
- Social Psychology Seeks to Understand the Causes of Social Behavior
- The Search for Basic Principles in a Changing Social World

Social Psychology: Advances at the Boundaries
- Cognition and Behavior: Two Sides of the Same Social Coin
- The Role of Emotion in the Social Side of Life
- Social Relationships: How Important They Are for Well-Being
- Social Neuroscience: The Intersection of Social Psychology and Brain Research
- The Role of Implicit (Nonconscious) Processes
- Taking Full Account of Social Diversity

How Social Psychologists Answer the Questions They Ask: Research as the Route to Increased Knowledge
- Systematic Observation: Describing the World Around Us
- Correlation: The Search for Relationships
- The Experimental Method: Knowledge Through Systematic Intervention
- Further Thoughts on Causality: The Role of Mediating Variables
- Meta-Analysis: Assessing a Body of Knowledge

The Role of Theory in Social Psychology

The Quest for Knowledge and the Rights of Individuals: Seeking an Appropriate Balance

Getting the Most Out of This Book: A User's Guide

Learning Objectives

1.1 Evaluate the diverse topics that social psychology seeks to understand

1.2 Examine the major avenues that social psychology is currently exploring

1.3 Understand the methods social psychologists use to gain insight into the questions posed

1.4 Explain how theories play a key role in social psychological research

1.5 Identify how the dilemma of deception is addressed in social psychology

1.6 Outline the steps taken to make reading this book a pleasant and informative experience

Consider, for a moment, what aspect of your life impacts your health and happiness most? Did your relationships with other people come to mind? What would your life be like without your family, friends, roommates, romantic partners, professors, coworkers, sports teammates—all the people you care about and with whom you interact? The truth is human beings are a truly social species. Each of us is connected to and influenced by other people, even if we're not always consciously aware of all the ways we are affected by them. Indeed, a fundamental message of social psychology is that both the good and the bad in our lives involve other people. As evidenced in the following quotations, people from all cultures and walks of life agree that our connections to others bring happiness and meaning to our lives. At the same time, we also know that other people—when they disagree with us, exclude us, or harm us—can be the source of our worst pain.

- The Dalai Lama: "Our prime purpose in this life is to help others."
- John Lennon, former musician with the Beatles: "Count your age by friends, not years."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"
- Bob Marley, famous reggae musician: "Truth is, everybody is going to hurt you: You just gotta find the ones worth suffering for."
- David Byrne, musician formerly of the Talking Heads: "Sometimes it's a form of love just to talk to somebody that you have nothing in common with and still be fascinated by their presence."
- Robert Alan Silverstein, author and social change activist: "In our hectic, fast-paced, consumer-driven society, it's common to feel overwhelmed, isolated and alone. . . . The sense of belonging we feel when we make the time to take an active role in our communities can give us a deeper sense of meaning and purpose."

Connecting with others—both as individuals and as part of social groups—is a major predictor not only of happiness and well-being but also of physical health. Robert Putnam summed up the importance of social connections based on extensive research reported in his book, *Bowling Alone*: "If you belong to no groups but decide to join one, you cut your risk of dying over the next year in half." If you had any lingering doubts about the importance of the social side of life, perhaps you don't anymore!

We also know that solitary confinement is so bad for mental health that it is often considered "cruel and unusual punishment." Try, for a moment, to imagine life in total isolation from others, as shown in the movie *Cast Away*, the story of a person who finds himself stranded on an uninhabited island after his plane crashes in the Pacific Ocean. After a while, he craves human company so much that he paints a face on a

Figure 1.1 Would Life in Isolation Be Worth Living?

Can you imagine what it would be like to live entirely alone, having no contact with other people? In the film *Cast Away*, a person who is stranded on an uninhabited island is so desperate for company that he "invents a person" by painting a volleyball to look like a human face. He wants to get back to his human connections so badly that he risks his life on the open seas to do so.

volleyball, gives it a name (Wilson), and talks with it regularly because it is his only friend (Figure 1.1). In the end, the character, played by Tom Hanks, decides that his life alone is not worth living, and so he risks all in an attempt to return to civilization and connect with living people again.

While we know that many people find the thought of a physically isolated existence to be disturbing, let's consider "disconnection from others" on a smaller, digital scale. Try to remember the last time you forgot your cell phone or lost access to Facebook, Twitter, or other social media outlets. How did it feel to be out of contact? Did it freak you out? Perhaps that's why it won't be surprising to learn that even these digital forms of connection to others help to satisfy our emotional needs. For example, research shows that among college students the number of Facebook friends predicts life satisfaction (Manago, Taylor, & Greenfield, 2012). It's safe to say, then, that social contact is a central aspect of our lives. In a very basic sense, it helps define who we are and the quality of our existence.

So, get ready for a fascinating journey, because the social side of life is the focus of this entire book. Social psychology is the branch of psychology that studies all aspects of our social existence—everything from love and helping people on the one hand, to prejudice, exclusion, and violence on the other. Social psychologists also investigate how groups influence us, how the social context we find ourselves in affects the way we make decisions, and how we explain ourselves and the actions of other people. As you will see, how we think about ourselves at any given point in time—our identity—is shaped by our relationships with other people, which in turn guides our social behavior. We will be addressing some questions you've probably thought about already. After all, the nature of the social world is of interest to all of us. But we believe that some of the answers concerning human social behavior that has emerged from social psychological research will nevertheless surprise and intrigue you.

Social psychology covers a lot of territory—much of what's central to human experience. What differentiates social psychology from other social sciences is its focus on explaining influences on the individual's thought and behavior. What differentiates social psychology from the informal observations of people that we all make is its scientific nature. What we mean by the science of social psychology is so crucial that we will explain it in this chapter, in terms of the different techniques that are used by social psychologists to go about answering fascinating questions about the social side of life.

We begin with a formal definition of social psychology: what it is and what it seeks to accomplish. Next, we'll describe several current trends in social psychology. These will be reflected throughout this book, so knowing about them at the start will help you understand why they are important. We'll also examine the pros and cons of different methods used by social psychologists to answer questions about the social side of life. A working knowledge of these basic methods will help you understand how social psychologists add to our understanding of social thoughts and behavior, and will also be useful to you outside the context of this course to evaluate research findings you read about in major media outlets.

In fact, social psychological research has uncovered so much useful information about human behavior that in September 2015, President Obama issued an executive order requiring federal government agencies to incorporate behavioral science insights—much of it based on social psychological research concerning factors that affect how people actually go about making decisions—into their programs (Sunstein, 2015). As you will see, social psychologists have accumulated an impressive body of knowledge about how people think, feel, and behave, along with the circumstances that influence those responses. Indeed, social psychological research has taught us much about the "human animal" that is being fruitfully applied in numerous domains. These include understanding how people make use of digital technology and social media and how people can best cope with adversity, to making it easier for low-income teens to attend college and adults to participate in retirement savings plans. Consistent with the White House's Social and Behavioral Sciences Team Report, we believe that social psychological research informs us about how reforms can be made with the aim of improving people's lives. Given the empirical and scientific approach used by social psychologists to uncover "what works and what doesn't work," we think you will see why this branch of psychology is well-placed to provide answers to many questions.

1.1: Social Psychology: What It Is and Is Not

Objective **Evaluate the diverse topics that social psychology seeks to understand**

Providing a definition of almost any field is a complex task. In the case of social psychology, this difficulty is increased by the field's broad scope. As you will see in every chapter of this book, social psychologists truly have a wide range of interests. Yet, despite this variation, most focus mainly on the following task: understanding how and why individuals behave, think, and feel as they do in social situations—ones involving the actual or symbolic presence of other people. How people define themselves and others in a given situation can alter how we behave. Accordingly, we define social psychology as the scientific field that seeks to understand *the nature and causes of individual behavior, feelings, and thoughts in social situations*. Another way to put this is to say that social psychology investigates the ways in which our thoughts, feelings, and actions are *influenced by the social environments in which we find ourselves—by other people or our thoughts about them*. We'll now clarify this definition by taking a closer look at several of its key aspects.

1.1.1: Social Psychology Is Scientific in Nature

Many people seem to believe that this term *science* applies only to fields such as chemistry, physics, and biology—ones that use the kind of equipment shown in Figure 1.2 to investigate some aspect of the physical world. If you share that view, you may find our suggestion that social psychology is a scientific discipline perplexing. How can a field that seeks to study the nature of love, the causes of aggression, the influence of groups on conceptions of ourselves, and many other topics be scientific in the same sense as physics or chemistry? The answer is surprisingly simple.

The term *science* does not refer to a special group of highly advanced fields. Rather, it refers to two things: (1) a set of values and (2) methods that can be used to study a wide range of topics. In deciding whether a given field is or is not scientific, therefore, the critical question is: *Does it adopt these values and methods*? To the extent the field does, it is scientific in nature. To the extent it does not, it falls outside the realm of science. We'll examine the procedures used by social psychologists in their research in detail in a later section, so here we will focus on the core values that all fields must adopt to be considered scientific in nature. Four of these are most important:

Accuracy: A commitment to gathering and evaluating information about the world (including social behavior) in as careful, precise, and error-free a manner as possible. This means that casual "people watching" that each of us might do at a crowded event will not meet this definition. Each of us may focus on different things so there is little precision, and the observations will lack *replicability*—the same "findings" when performed by someone else may not be obtained.

Objectivity: A commitment to obtaining and evaluating such information in a manner that is as free from bias as possible. This means that with causal "people watching" we may evaluate what we see differently than others would, so our observations lack objectivity.

Skepticism: A commitment to accepting findings as accurate only to the extent they have been verified over and over again. Here again you should notice the importance of *replication*—where different investigators can re-produce the procedure used by others and arrive at the same conceptual conclusions.

Figure 1.2 What Is Science?

Many people believe that only fields that use equipment like that shown here (left photo) to study the physical world can be viewed as scientific. Others think that "people watching" as shown in the middle photo is a form of science. However, the term *science* actually refers to adherence to a set of basic values (e.g., accuracy, objectivity) and use of a set of methods to *systematically* examine almost any aspect of the world around us—including the social side of life. In contrast, other approaches that are *not* scientific in nature (right photo) do not accept these values or use these methods.

Open-Mindedness: A commitment to changing one's views—even those that are strongly held—if existing evidence suggests that these views are inaccurate. Social psychologists have produced plenty of surprises by conducting research, which has required us to reconsider the role of groups for our well-being, how many processes operate non-consciously, how the framing of issues can affect our attitudes and preferences, and why what actually makes people happy is often different than our expectations of what will do so. All of these have suggested revisions in assumptions about human nature.

Social psychology, as a field, is committed to these values and applies them in its efforts to understand the nature of social behavior. In contrast, fields that are *not* scientific make assertions about the world, and about people, that are not put to the careful test and analysis required by the values that guide social psychology. In such fields—ones like astrology and aromatherapy—intuition, faith, and unobservable forces are considered to be sufficient (see Figure 1.2) for reaching conclusions—the opposite of what is true in social psychology.

"But why adopt the scientific approach? Isn't social psychology just common sense?" Having taught for many years, we can almost hear you asking this question. After all, we all spend much of our lives interacting with other people and thinking about them, so in a sense, we are all amateur social psychologists. So, why don't we each just rely on our own experience and intuition as a basis for drawing conclusions about the social side of life?

Our answer is straightforward: because such sources provide an inconsistent and unreliable guide to understanding social behavior. This is so because our own experiences are unique and may not provide a solid foundation for answering general questions such as: "Why do people sometimes 'go along with the group' even when they might disagree with what it is doing?" and "How can we know what other people are thinking or feeling at any given time?" In addition, as we have learned from social psychological research, people are often unaware of what influences them. Individuals may be able to generate "theories" about how they are or are not influenced by other people, but such common sense beliefs are often biased by wishful thinking. For example, as suggested by Figure 1.3, we might want to view ourselves as "independent" and fail to see how we are actually influenced by other people, or alternatively we might want to believe a certain kind of change is possible so we claim to have been influenced by others who share our views, perhaps more than we actually are.

Figure 1.3 Being Influenced by the Actions of Other People

We can be influenced by the behavior of other people—either by seeing and being with them via social media or by physically being immersed ourselves in such events. Such exposure to others, especially when we identify with them, often exerts powerful effects on our own behavior and thought.

It is also the case that there are widely endorsed ideas about various aspects of social life that are inconsistent with each other. Only objective research evidence can provide clear answers about which of such contradictory ideas are true. For instance, consider the following statement: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." When people are separated from those they love, they miss them and may experience increased longing for them. Many people would agree with this idea, in part because they can retrieve an instance like that from their own memory. But now consider the following statement: "Out of sight, out of mind." Is this idea true? Did you, after leaving your high school sweetheart and swearing undying love, find a new romantic interest fairly quickly upon arriving at college? Many popular songs advocate just that—for instance, Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young's song: "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with." As you can see, these two views—both suggested by common sense and popular culture—are contradictory. The same is true for many other informal observations about human behavior—they each seem plausible, but often imply opposite conclusions. How about these: "Two heads are better than one," and "Too many cooks spoil the broth." One suggests that when people work together, they perform better (e.g., make better decisions). The other suggests that when people work together, they may act in ways that actually harm the product (e.g., that they make worse decisions). Much careful systematic research has revealed that whether groups show better or worse performance than individuals depends on a variety of factors: the nature of the task, whether the work can be effectively divided up, the expertise of the group members, and how well information is shared among them (Minson & Mueller, 2012; Stasser, Stewart, & Wittenbaum, 1995; van Ginkel & van Knippenberg, 2009).

By now, our main point should be clear: Common sense often suggests a confusing and inconsistent picture of human behavior. Yet, it can offer intriguing hypotheses that can be tested in controlled research. What it doesn't tell us is *when* various principles or generalizations hold—for instance, does "absence makes the heart grow fonder," primarily among relationships that have already attained a certain level of commitment? Likewise, it doesn't tell us for *whom*, or the sort of relationships, "out of sight, out of mind" is most likely to occur. Only a scientific approach that examines social thought and behavior in different contexts and populations (such as young versus older people) can provide that kind of information, and this is one basic reason that social psychologists put their faith in the scientific method: It yields more conclusive evidence. In fact, as you'll soon see, it is designed to help us determine not just *which* of the opposite sets of predictions mentioned earlier is correct, but also *when*, for *whom*, and *why* one or the other might apply.

But this is not the only reason for not relying on common sense. As we'll note over and over again (e.g., Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8), our thinking is subject to several types of biases that can lead us badly astray. Here's one example: Think back over major projects on which you have worked in the past (writing term papers, cooking a complicated dish, painting your room). Now, try to remember two things: (1) your initial estimates about how long it would take you to complete these jobs and (2) how long it actually took. Is there a gap between these two numbers? In all likelihood because most of us fall victim to the *planning fallacy*, there is a strong tendency to believe that projects will take less time than they actually do or, alternatively, that we can accomplish more in a given period of time than is really true (Halkjelsvik & Jorgensen, 2012). Moreover, we fall victim to this bias in our thoughts over and over again, despite repeated experiences that tell us "everything takes longer than we think it will."

Why are we subject to this kind of error? Research by social psychologists indicates that part of the answer involves a tendency to think about the future when we are estimating how long a job will take. This prevents us from remembering how long similar tasks took in the past, and that, in turn, leads us to underestimate

the time we need now (Buehler, Griffin, & Ross, 1994). This is just one of the many ways in which we can—and often do—make errors in thinking about other people (and ourselves). Because we are prone to such errors in our thinking about the social world, we cannot rely on introspecting about the influences on us—or rely on common sense—to solve the mysteries of social behavior. Rather, we need scientific evidence about what *most* people do, whether they realize that they do so or not, and providing such evidence is, in essence, what social psychology is all about.

1.1.2: Social Psychology Focuses on the Behavior of Individuals

Societies vary greatly in terms of their overall levels of violence; yet, social psychology focuses on explaining why individuals perform aggressive actions or refrain from doing so. Such acknowledgment of cultural differences applies to virtually all other aspects of social behavior, from conformity to helping, love as well as conflict, but social psychology aims to address the thought and emotional processes underlying those actions in individuals. This means that, as we noted earlier, because none of us are "islands" and all of us, instead, are strongly influenced by other people and the situations we find ourselves in, much research will systematically examine cultural and other contextual factors to illuminate just how those influences are exerted on the individual.

Social psychologists examine *how* groups influence individual behavior, *how* culture becomes internalized and affects individual preferences, and *how* emotions and moods affect the decisions made by the individual. Although our emphasis will be on how social factors affect the individual, as you will see throughout this book, many nonsocial factors (features of the environment; how the information we receive is framed) can exert powerful effects on us, often by influencing our emotions and social thoughts. The field's major interest lies in understanding just how social situations shape the actions of individuals.

Clearly, this does *not* mean the role that social and cultural factors play in shaping the individual is neglected. Far from it. For example, considerable research has begun to address how ethnicity and social class shape our "selves" (whether we construe it as independent from others or as interdependent with them) and, consequently, social behavior (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). This means that some institutional settings will be experienced as "friendly" or more congenial for one type of self rather than the other. For example, American universities tend to promote an independent model of self, which is more consistent with a middle-class standard of behavior than the self that is formed as a result of growing up in a working-class environment (Stephens, Fryberg, & Markus, 2012). In part because of differences in material resources, students from middle-class homes are encouraged to leave home, develop their own distinct interests, and choose their own pathway in life. In contrast, those from working-class backgrounds are more likely to live in the same place most of their lives, be more strongly embedded in familial and local social networks, and feel a need to fit in by displaying concern for the interests of others. Because of the different life experiences and selves that emerge among those whose social class origins differ, the norms prevalent in American university settings can be a good or rather poor cultural match. What this research reveals is how life experiences, which differ systematically according to social class and other group memberships, affect the individual. Because "who we are"—our identities—affects our thought and behavior, social psychological understanding of the individual is enriched by close examination of the following links.

Social Contexts/Experiences ⟹ *Self-Identities* ⟹ *Social Behavior*

1.1.3: Social Psychology Seeks to Understand the Causes of Social Behavior

Social psychologists are primarily interested in understanding the many factors and conditions that shape the social thought and behavior of individuals—their actions, feelings, beliefs, memories, and judgments. Obviously, a huge number of variables can play a role, although most fall under the five major headings described here.

THE ACTIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF OTHER PERSONS Consider the following events:

> *You are at a party and you notice that a very attractive person is smiling at you. In fact, this person is looking at you in a way that leaves little room for interpretation: That person is sending a clear signal saying "Hey, you look good!"*
>
> *You return from class one day and as you approach the door to your dorm room you see a friend of yours is sitting on the floor looking very down. You stop to ask if she's ok, and you see that she's been crying.*

Will these actions of others have any effect on your own emotions, thoughts, and behavior? Very likely. If you too are interested in potential romance, you may be very pleased when you see someone looking at you in a "let's get to know each other" kind of way, and you may then go over and say "Hi!" When you see that your friend has been crying, you are likely to ask "what happened?" and sit down to provide her with some comfort while you listen to her story. Instances like these, where we observe other people and respond to them, indicate that other people's emotional expressions often have a powerful impact upon us (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4 When Other People Communicate Their Emotions, We Respond

We are often affected by others people's expression of emotions. Even though in one case the person is expressing positive emotion toward us and in the other the person is expressing negative feelings, in both these instances we may be motivated to approach the other person.

In addition, we are also often affected by others' appearance. Be honest: Don't you behave differently toward highly attractive persons than toward less attractive ones? Toward very old people compared to young ones? Toward people who belong to your own ethnic group compared to ones different from your own? Your answer to these questions is probably "yes," because we do often react to others' visible characteristics, such as their appearance (McCall, 1997; Twenge & Manis, 1998). In fact, research findings (e.g., Hassin & Trope, 2000) indicate that we cannot ignore others' appearance even when we consciously try to do so. So despite warnings to avoid "judging books by their covers," we are often strongly affected by other people's group memberships as indicated by appearance—even if we are unaware of such effects and might deny their existence (see Chapters 6 and 7). Interestingly, research findings indicate that relying on others' appearance as a guide to their characteristics is not always wrong; in fact, they can be relatively accurate, especially when we can observe others behaving spontaneously, rather than in posed photos (Nauman, Vazire, Rentfrow, & Gosling, 2009).

COGNITIVE PROCESSES Suppose that you have arranged to meet a friend, and this person is late. In fact, after 30 minutes you begin to suspect that your friend will never arrive. Finally, she or he does appear and says "Sorry . . . I forgot all about meeting you until a few minutes ago." How will you react? Probably you will feel some annoyance. Imagine that instead, however, your friend says "I'm so sorry to be late. . . . There was a big accident, and the traffic was tied up for miles." Now how will you react? Perhaps you'll fell less annoyance—but not necessarily. If your friend is often late and has used this excuse before, you may be suspicious about whether this explanation is true. In contrast, if this is the first time your friend has been late, or if your friend has never used such an excuse in the past, you may accept it as true. In other words, your reactions in this situation will depend upon your memories of your friend's past behavior and your inferences about whether her or his explanation is really true. Situations like this one call attention to the fact that *cognitive processes* play a crucial role in social behavior. We try to make sense of people in our social world by attributing their actions to something about them (e.g., their traits) or something about the circumstances (e.g., unforeseeable traffic). This means we engage in lots of social cognition—thinking long and hard about other people—what they are like, why they do what they do, how they might react to our behavior, and so on (Shah, 2003). Social psychologists are well aware of the importance of such processes and social cognition is a very important area of research (Fiske, 2009).

ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES: IMPACT OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD Do we become more irritable and aggressive when the weather is hot and steamy than when it is cooler and more comfortable (Bell, Greene, Fisher, & Baum, 2001; Rotton & Cohn, 2000)? Does exposure to a pleasant smell in the air make people more helpful to others (Baron, 1997)? Does simply seeing money—such as a picture of a dollar bill—interfere with our ability to enjoy small pleasures in life like the taste of chocolate (Quoidbach, Dunn, Petrides, & Mikolajczak, 2010)? Research findings indicate that aspects of the physical environment can indeed influence our feelings, thoughts, and behavior, so these variables, too, certainly fall within the realm of modern social psychology.

BIOLOGICAL FACTORS Is social behavior influenced by biological processes? In the past, most social psychologists might have answered no, and certainly not in any direct fashion. Now, however, some suggest that our preferences, emotions, and behaviors may be linked, to some extent, to our biological inheritance (Buss, 2008; Schmitt, 2004)—although social experiences too have a powerful effect and may interact with genetic factors in generating the complex patterns of our social lives (Gillath, Shaver, Baek, & Chun, 2008).

In fact, it is becoming clear that the operation of these two factors—biology and social experience—is not unidirectional. Experiences of stress, especially early in life but also in adulthood as a function of exposure to various forms of trauma including

political violence, can induce neurobiological changes that affect psychological well-being (Canetti & Lindner, 2015; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; McInnis, McQuaid, Matheson, & Anisman, 2015). Indeed, there is now accumulating evidence that environmental factors and social experiences—through what is called *epigenetic processes*, where the operation of certain genes is turned on or off—can influence behavior, sometimes long after initial exposure (Spector, 2012).

The view that biological factors play an important role in social behavior has been emphasized among those who take an **evolutionary psychology** perspective (e.g., Buss, 2004; Buss & Shackelford, 1997). This branch of psychology suggests that our species, like all others, has been subject to the process of biological evolution throughout its history and that, as a result, we now possess a large number of *evolved psychological mechanisms* that help (or once helped) us to deal with important problems relating to survival.

Through the process of evolution, which involves the three basic components of variation, inheritance, and selection, such tendencies become part of our biological inheritance. Variation refers to the fact that organisms belonging to a given species vary in many different ways; indeed, such variation is a basic part of life on our planet. Human beings, as you already know, vary on what sometimes seems to be an almost countless number of dimensions. Inheritance refers to the fact that some of these variations can be passed from one generation to the next through complex mechanisms that we are beginning to understand only now. Selection refers to the fact that some variations give the individuals who possess them an "edge" in terms of reproduction: They are more likely to survive, find mates, and pass these variations on to succeeding generations. The result is that over time, more and more members of the species possess these variations. This change in the characteristics of a species over time—immensely long periods of time—is the concrete outcome of evolution. (See Figure 1.5 for a summary of this process.)

Social psychologists who adopt the evolutionary perspective suggest that this process applies to at least some aspects of social behavior. For instance, consider the question of mate preference. Why do we find some people attractive? According to the evolutionary perspective because the characteristics they show—symmetrical facial features; well-toned, shapely bodies; clear skin; lustrous hair—are associated with "good genes," they are likely to indicate that the people who possess them are healthy and vigorous and therefore good mates (Schmitt & Buss, 2001; Tesser & Martin, 1996). For instance, these characteristics—the ones we find attractive—potentially indicate that the persons who show them have strong immune systems that protect them from many illnesses (Li & Kenrick, 2006). Presumably, a preference for characteristics associated with good health and vigor among our ancestors increased their chances of successfully reproducing; this, in turn, could have contributed to our preference for people who possess these aspects of appearance.

Is there any reason to suppose that evolution might favor different behaviors for men and women? When asked to indicate the characteristics in potential romantic partners that they find desirable, both genders—but especially women—rate a sense of humor high on the list (e.g., Buss, 2008). From an evolutionary point of view, a sense of humor might signal high intelligence, which would make humorous people attractive (Griskevicius et al., 2009). Another possibility is that a sense of humor signals something else: interest in forming new relationships. Humor might signal that the person is available—and interested. Research by Li and colleagues (2009) found that people are more likely to use humor and laugh when they find

Figure 1.5 Evolutionary Psychology Perspective

Evolution involves three major components: variation, inheritance, and selection. Social psychologists who are guided by this perspective are particularly interested in features that might account for gendered behavior, especially those related to sexuality.

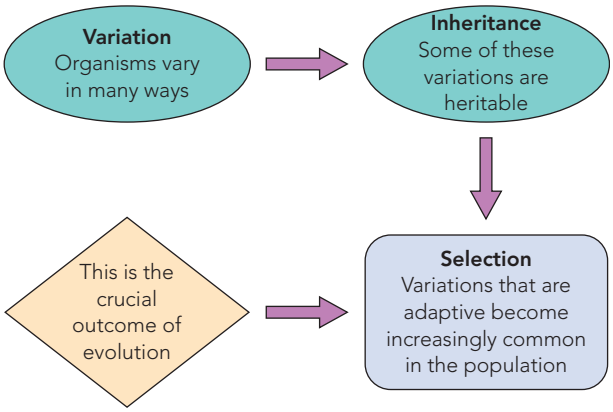

Figure 1.6 Humor: An Important "Plus" in Dating

Research findings indicate that humor is viewed as a desirable characteristic in potential romantic partners, partly because it is perceived as a sign that the person is interested in forming a new relationship. Such effects occur in many situations, including dating. So, if you want romantic partners, keep on smiling and make jokes.

another person attractive than when they do not; people who used humor during speed dating sessions were perceived as showing more romantic interest than ones who did not (see Figure 1.6).

Other topics have been studied from the evolutionary perspective (e.g., helping others; aggression; preferences for various ways of attracting persons who are already in a relationship), and we'll describe this research in other chapters. Here, we wish to emphasize the following fact: The evolutionary perspective does *not* suggest that we inherit specific patterns of social behavior; rather, it contends that we inherit tendencies or predispositions that may be apparent in our overt actions, depending on the environments in which we live. Similarly, this perspective does *not* suggest that we are "forced" or driven by our genes to act in specific ways. Rather, it merely suggests that because of our genetic inheritance, we have tendencies to behave in certain ways that, at least in the past, may have enhanced the chances that our ancestors would survive and pass their genes on to us. These tendencies, can be—and often are—overridden by cognitive factors and the effects of experience (Pettijohn & Jungeberg, 2004). For instance, what is viewed as attractive changes over time and is often very different in diverse cultures. So yes, genetic factors play some role in our behavior and thought, but they are clearly only one factor among many that influence how we think and act.

1.1.4: The Search for Basic Principles in a Changing Social World

One key goal of science is the development of basic principles that are accurate regardless of when or where they are applied or tested. Social psychologists seek to uncover the basic principles that govern social life. For instance, they'd like to determine what factors influence attraction, helping, obedience, the attitudes we form, and so on. The research they conduct is aimed to yield such knowledge—basic principles that will be true across time and in different cultures.

On the other hand, social psychologists recognize that cultures differ greatly and that the social world in which we live is constantly changing—in very important ways. For instance, cultures vary greatly with respect to when and where people are expected to "dress up" rather than dress casually. While casual is acceptable in almost all contexts in the United States, more formal "dressy" attire is often expected in other cultures. This same point applies to more important aspects of social life, too: Should teenagers be allowed to date and meet without adult supervision? Should you name your baby after a relative, or should you give your child a unique and, perhaps, unusual name? At what age should people retire, and how should they be treated after they do? Should we make choices that are the same as other people we know, or should we try to be "different" and stand out from others (see Figure 1.7)?

Cultures differ tremendously in these and countless other ways, and this complicates the task of establishing general principles of social behavior and social thought. Should we try to compliment another person to make him or her like us? This is an ingratiation tactic that, as you will see in Chapter 8, has been found to be generally effective in individualistic cultures. Yet, research has revealed that because people from some cultures value independence (being seen as unique and separate from others) while others value interdependence (being seen as similar to and connected to others), responses to such seemingly positive treatment depends on whether it implies the person is different or the same as other members of his or her group (Siy & Cheryan, 2013). So, for example, those who are Asian-born respond more negatively to treatment that implies they are different from other group members, whereas those who are U.S.-born respond more negatively to treatment that implies they are the same as other group members.

In addition, within a culture, how we interact with each other can change across time. Because of social media, and digital technology more generally, people now meet potential romantic partners in different ways than in the past when, typically, they were introduced by friends or met at dances arranged by their schools, churches, or other social organizations. Does this mean that the foundations of attraction

Figure 1.7 Cultures Differ in Many Ways—Including the Importance of Personal Uniqueness

In some cultures, it is considered important to be different from others, while in others it is seen as important to fit in with those around us.

are different today than in the past? Social psychologists believe that despite these changes, the same basic principles apply: Physical attractiveness is still a basic ingredient, even though what is deemed attractive may differ across time. Likewise, the basic principles of persuasion too remain much the same, even if messages aimed at influencing us are delivered in a different format (e.g., electronically) than in the past (e.g., print). In short, although the task of identifying basic, accurate principles of social behavior and social thought is complicated by the existence of cultural differences and rapid changes in social life, the goals of social psychological research remain the same: uncovering basic, accurate knowledge about the social side of life that applies in a wide range of contexts and situations.

In summary, social psychology focuses mainly on understanding the causes of social behavior—on identifying factors that shape our feelings, behavior, and thought in social situations. It seeks to accomplish this goal through the use of scientific methods, and it takes careful note of the fact that social behavior is influenced by a wide range of social, cognitive, environmental, cultural, and biological factors. The remainder of this text is devoted to describing some of the key findings of social psychology. We're certain that you will find it fascinating—after all, it is about *us* and the social side of *our* lives! We're equally sure that you will find the outcomes of some research surprising and that it may challenge many of your ideas about people and social relations. We predict that after reading this book, you'll never think about the social side of life in quite the same way as before.

Questions

1. Define social psychology. Explain the core values adopted by social psychology as a science.
2. Why is it important to adopt a scientific approach in order to draw conclusions in social psychology? Why can't one rely on common sense to understand the social world?
3. How does social class and group membership affect our self-identity, and how does our self-identity influence our thought and behavior?
4. What are the various factors and conditions that shape the social thought and behavior of individuals? Elaborate each factor by citing examples.
5. What do we know about the behavioral tendencies related to mating and sexuality from an evolutionary perspective? How do cognitive factors and experience affect such tendencies?
6. What is the role of culture with regard to social behavior and social thought? Compare the practices of your culture with another, and discuss how it complicates the application of social principles to various cultural contexts.

1.2: Social Psychology: Advances at the Boundaries

Objective **Examine the major avenues that social psychology is currently exploring**

Textbooks, like fine wine, don't necessarily improve with age. So, to remain current, they must keep pace with changes in the fields they represent. Making certain that this book is current, in the best sense of this term, is one of our key goals. You can be sure that the research presented in the chapters that follow is a contemporary view of social psychological knowledge concerning the social side of life. Consistent with this goal, we will now describe several major trends in modern social psychology—themes and ideas that you will see throughout this text because they represent what is of central focus to social psychology.

1.2.1: Cognition and Behavior: Two Sides of the Same Social Coin

In the past, social psychologists could be divided into two distinct groups: those who were primarily interested in social *behavior*—how people act in social situations, and those who were primarily interested in social *thought*—how people attempt to make sense of the social world and to understand themselves and others. In modern social psychology, behavior and cognition are seen as intimately, and continuously, linked. In other words, there is virtually universal agreement in the field that we cannot hope to understand how and why people behave in certain ways in social situations without considering their thoughts, memory, intentions, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs. Similarly, virtually all social psychologists agree that there is a complex interplay between social thought and social behavior. What we think about others influences our actions toward them, and the consequences of these actions then affect our emotions and social thought. So, in trying to understand the social side of life, modern social psychology integrates both. That will be our approach throughout the book, and it will be present in virtually every chapter.

1.2.2: The Role of Emotion in the Social Side of Life

Can you imagine life without emotions? Probably not, because life without feelings would be missing a lot and not reflect humans as we know them. Social psychologists have always been interested in emotions and moods, and with good reason: They play a key role in many aspects of social life. For instance, imagine that you want a favor from a friend or acquaintance—when would you ask for it, when this person is in a good mood or a bad one? Research findings indicate that you would do much better when that person is in a good mood, because positive moods (or *affect* as social psychologists term such feelings) do increase our tendency to offer help to others (e.g., Isen & Levin, 1972). Similarly, suppose you are meeting someone for the first time—do you think your current mood might influence your reactions to this person? If you answered "yes," you are in agreement with the results of systematic research, which indicates our impressions of others (and our thoughts about them) are influenced by our current moods. More recently, social psychologists have been investigating the role of moods in a wide range of social behaviors (Forgas, Baumeister, & Tice, 2009), and overall, interest in this topic, including the impact of specific emotions, has increased. So, we include it here as another area in which rapid advances are being made at the boundaries of our current knowledge of social life.

1.2.3: Social Relationships: How Important They Are for Well-Being

If the social side of life is as important as we suggested at the start of this chapter, then relationships with others are its building blocks. When they are successful and satisfying, they add tremendously to our happiness, but when they go wrong, they can disrupt every other aspect of our lives and undermine our psychological health and well-being (Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010). Because our connections to others are so critical, social psychologists have sought to understand the nature of social relationships—how they begin and change over time, and why, gradually, some strengthen and deepen, while others weaken and end—often, causing tremendous pain to the people involved. We'll consider relationships in detail in Chapter 7, but here, to give you the flavor of this growing body of knowledge, we'll mention just a couple of lines of important and revealing research.

One such topic relates to the following question: "Is it better, in terms of building a strong relationship, to view one's partner (boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse)