

# Psychology Applied to Modern Life

Adjustment in the 21st Century







Thirteenth Edition

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Adjustment in the 21st Century

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***Psychology Applied to Modern Life:  
Adjustment in the 21st Century, 13th edition***  
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To two pillars of stability in this era  
of turmoil—my parents  
W.W.

To the memory of my mother,  
Dah Kennedy Dunn, and brother,  
James L. Dunn, Jr.  
D.S.D.

To Elizabeth S. Manley,  
for modeling good scholarship  
E.Y.H.



## About the Authors

**Wayne Weiten** is a graduate of Bradley University and received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Illinois, Chicago, in 1981. He has taught at the College of DuPage, Santa Clara University, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has received distinguished teaching awards from Division Two of the American Psychological Association (APA) and from the College of DuPage. In 1991, he helped chair the APA National Conference on Enhancing the Quality of Undergraduate Education in Psychology. He is a former president of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology and the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association. In 2006, one of the national teaching awards given annually by the Society for the Teaching of Psychology was named in his honor. Weiten has conducted research on a wide range of topics, including educational measurement, jury decision making, attribution theory, pressure as a form of stress, and the technology of textbooks. He is also the author of *Psychology: Themes & Variations* (Cengage, 2022, 11th edition).

**Dana S. Dunn** earned his B.A. in psychology from Carnegie Mellon University and received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Virginia. He is currently professor of psychology at Moravian University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He is currently chair of the psychology department at Moravian University. A Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science (APS) and the American Psychological Association (Divisions 1, 2, 8, and 22), Dunn served as president of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology in 2010. A frequent speaker at international, national, and regional disciplinary conferences, Dunn has written numerous articles, chapters, and book reviews concerning his areas of research interest:

the teaching of psychology, social psychology, rehabilitation psychology, and educational assessment. He is the author or editor of thirty-five books, including, *The Social Psychology of Disability* (2015), *The Psychology Major's Companion: Everything You Need to Know to Get Where You Want to Go* (with Jane S. Halonen, 2023), and *Thought and Knowledge: An Introduction to Critical Thinking* (with Diane F. Halpern, 2024). In 2013, Dunn received the Charles L. Brewer Award for Distinguished Teaching of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation.

**Elizabeth Yost Hammer** earned her B.S. in psychology from Troy State University and received her Ph.D. in experimental social psychology from Tulane University. She is currently the Kellogg Professor in Teaching in the Psychology Department and Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Faculty Development (CAT+FD) at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. Her work in CAT+FD includes organizing pedagogical workshops and faculty development initiatives. She is a Fellow of Division 2 of the American Psychological Association, a past president of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology, and served as the treasurer for the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. A former Chief Reader for AP Psychology, she is a co-author of the 4th edition of Myers' *Psychology for the AP Course* and is the author of the teacher's edition for that book as well as Blair-Broeker and Ernst's *Thinking About Psychology*. Hammer is passionate about teaching and was the 2021 recipient of the Charles L. Brewer Award for Distinguished Teaching of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation. She, her husband, and their two rescue dogs work, play, and when necessary, self-isolate in New Orleans, Louisiana.





## To the Instructor

Many students enter adjustment courses with great expectations. They've ambled through their local bookstores, and in the "Psychology" section they've seen numerous self-help books that offer highly touted recipes for achieving happiness for a mere \$15.95. After paying far more money to enroll in a college course that deals with the same issues as the self-help books, many students expect a revelatory experience. However, the majority of us with professional training in psychology or counseling take a rather dim view of self-help books and the "pop" psychology they represent. Psychologists tend to see this literature as oversimplified, intellectually dishonest, and opportunistic and often summarily dismiss the "pop" psychology that so many students have embraced. Instructors try to supplant "pop" psychology with more sophisticated academic psychology based on current scholarship, which is more complex and less accessible.

In this textbook, we have tried to come to grips with the problem of differing expectations between student and teacher. Our goal has been to produce a comprehensive, serious, research-oriented treatment of the topic of adjustment that also acknowledges the existence of popular psychology and looks critically at its contributions. Our approach involves the following:

- In Chapter 1, we confront the phenomenon of popular self-help books. We take students beneath the seductive surface of such books and analyze some of their typical flaws. Our goal is to make students more critical consumers of this type of literature by encouraging them to focus on substance, not on trendy claims.
- While encouraging a more critical attitude toward self-help books, we do not suggest that all should be dismissed. Instead, we acknowledge that some of them offer authentic insights. With this in mind, we highlight some of the better books in this genre in Recommended Reading boxes sprinkled throughout the text. These recommended books tie in with the adjacent topical coverage and show the student the interface between academic and popular psychology.
- We try to provide the student with a better appreciation of the merits of the empirical approach to understanding behavior. This effort to clarify the role of research, which is rare for an adjustment text, appears in the first chapter.

- Recognizing that adjustment students want to leave the course with concrete, personally useful information, we end each chapter with an Application section. The Applications are "how to" discussions that address everyday problems students encounter. While they focus on issues that are relevant to the content of the particular chapter, they contain more explicit advice than the text proper.

In summary, we have tried to make this book both challenging and applied. We hope that our approach will help students better appreciate the value and use of scientific psychology.

### Philosophy

A certain philosophy is inherent in any systematic treatment of the topic of adjustment. Our philosophy can be summarized as follows:

- We believe that an adjustment text should be a resource book for students. We have tried to design this book so that it encourages and facilitates the pursuit of additional information on adjustment-related topics. It should serve as a point of departure for more learning.
- We believe in theoretical eclecticism. This book will not indoctrinate your students along the lines of any single theoretical orientation. The psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic schools of thought are all treated with respect, as are cognitive, biological, cultural, evolutionary, and other perspectives.
- We believe that effective adjustment requires taking charge of one's own life. Throughout the book, we try to promote the notion that active coping efforts are generally superior to passivity and complacency.

### Changes in the Thirteenth Edition

One of the exciting things about psychology is that it is not a stagnant discipline. It continues to progress at what seems a faster and faster pace. A good textbook must evolve with the discipline. Although the professors and students who used the earlier editions of this book did not clamor for change, we have made countless content changes to keep up with new developments in psychology—adding and deleting some topics, condensing and reorganizing others, and updating everything (there are more than 1400 new references). A brief overview of some of these changes, listed

chapter-by-chapter, can be found on pages viii–xiv following this preface.

The most significant changes in this edition are the addition of two new box features. The first new box feature—*Adjustment in a Diverse World*—encourages students to think about, understand, and appreciate human diversity in its many forms. Topics included in this feature include race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. This box feature is tied to the increased emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and equity issues in this edition of the book. The second new box feature—*Adjustment and Technology*—explores how the ever-changing and advancing digital world affects all of us. The Internet and its many vestiges (e.g., smartphones, instant messages, tweets, Facebook, Instagram) have changed how people think and relate to themselves and others. As students will learn, there are both benefits and challenges posed by this ongoing digital revolution.

In addition to these new features, we continue to enhance the pedagogical value of our photo program by pairing each photo with an explanatory caption and eliminating photos that were largely decorative. To increase the clarity of the book's organization, we now number all the major headings in the chapters. Instructors who know the book already will notice that some new figures have been added and that many familiar ones have been updated to resonate with the book's new look.

As noted above, this edition of *Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 21st Century* also received a careful and thoughtful diversity, inclusion, and equity review. Following the recommendations of the 7th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, the text now relies on gender inclusive language. The singular pronouns “he” and “she” generally have been replaced with the plural pronouns “they” and “their.” Similarly, the dated term “freshmen” has been replaced with “first-year students.” An increased focus on disability and the experience of people with disabilities is also a new feature. Although disability is a form of diversity similar to gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class, among other categories, few texts in psychology make a concerted effort to review disability-related issues. This book is a standout exception among its peers. Other inclusive changes, including how particular groups are referred to, have also been made.

This revised book also includes updated learning objectives that appear at the start of each of the sections in every chapter. These learning outcomes inform both instructors and students about the relevant skills and knowledge that can be acquired in the course of study. Students can then apply, analyze, or evaluate related material.

As already noted, we incorporated many new research citations into this edition in order to represent the expansion of the psychological literature since the previous edition went to print. At the same time, we were mindful of

the problem posed to student readers when they were confronted with too many citations. Thus, at the same time that we added new references, we carefully culled many older ones to control the density of citations.

Finally, this edition of the book also includes reflection on and research regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences on the health and well-being of people around the world. Pandemic-related research published since the late spring of 2020 is reviewed and integrated into existing chapter topics.

## Writing Style

This book has been written with the student in mind. We have tried to integrate the technical jargon of our discipline into a relatively informal and down-to-earth writing style. We use concrete examples extensively to clarify complex concepts and to help maintain student interest. Although there are three authors, there is always a final review and rewrite of all sixteen chapters to ensure stylistic consistency.

## Features

This text contains a number of features intended to stimulate interest and enhance students' learning. These special features include the aforementioned *Adjustment in a Diverse World* and *Adjustment and Technology* box features, Applications, Recommended Reading boxes, Practice Tests, a didactic illustration program, cartoons, and the *Personal Explorations Workbook*. The thorough end-of-chapter pedagogy provides tools that support students' success in the course. It includes “Key Ideas,” a bulleted summary of the chapter's main points; “Key Terms,” a list of important vocabulary; “Key People,” a review of important thinkers; and a practice test with answer key, providing students with an opportunity for self-testing of chapter content.

## Applications

The end-of-chapter Applications should be of special interest to most students. They are tied to chapter content in a way that should show students how practical applications emerge out of theory and research. Although some of the material covered in these sections shows up frequently in adjustment texts, much of it is unique. Some of the Applications include the following:

- Understanding Intimate Partner Violence
- Improving Academic Performance
- Understanding Eating Disorders
- Getting Ahead in the Job Game
- Building Self-Esteem
- Enhancing Sexual Relationships
- Boosting Your Own Happiness



## Recommended Reading Boxes

Recognizing students' interest in self-help books, we have sifted through hundreds of them to identify some that may be especially useful. These books are featured in boxes that briefly review some of the higher-quality books, several of which were published recently. These Recommended Reading boxes are placed where they are germane to the material being covered in the text. Some of the recommended books are well known, whereas others are less so. Although we make it clear that we don't endorse every idea in every book, we think they all have something worthwhile to offer. This feature replaces the conventional suggested readings lists that usually appear at the ends of chapters, where they are almost universally ignored by students.

## Practice Tests

Each chapter ends with a ten-item multiple-choice Practice Test that should give students a fairly realistic assessment of their mastery of that chapter and valuable practice in taking the type of test that many of them will face in the classroom (if the instructor uses the Test Bank). This feature grew out of some research on students' use of textbook pedagogical devices (see Weiten, Guadagno, & Beck, 1996). This research indicated that students pay scant attention to some standard pedagogical devices. When students were grilled to gain a better understanding of this perplexing finding, it quickly became apparent that students are pragmatic about pedagogy. Essentially, their refrain was "We want study aids that will help us pass the next test." With this mandate in mind, we added the Practice Tests. They should be very realistic, given many of the items came from the Test Banks for previous editions (these items do not appear in the Test Bank for the current edition).

## Didactic Illustration Program

The illustration program is once again in full color, and as already noted, many new figures have been added along with extensive redrawing of many graphics. Although the illustrations are intended to make the book attractive and to help maintain student interest, they are not merely decorative: They have been carefully selected and crafted for their didactic value to enhance the educational goals of the text.

## Cartoons

A little comic relief usually helps keep a student interested, so we've sprinkled numerous cartoons throughout the book. Like the figures, these have been chosen to reinforce ideas in the text.

## Personal Explorations Workbook

As mentioned earlier, the *Personal Explorations Workbook* can be found in the very back of the text. It contains experiential exercises for each text chapter, designed to help your students

achieve personal insights. For each chapter, we have included one Self-Assessment exercise and one Self-Reflection exercise. The self-assessments are psychological tests or scales that students can take and score for themselves. The self-reflections consist of questions intended to help students think about themselves in relation to issues raised in the text. These exercises can be invaluable homework assignments. To facilitate assigning them as homework, we have printed the workbook section on perforated paper, so students can tear out the relevant pages and turn them in. In addition to providing easy-to-use homework assignments, many of these exercises can be used in class to stimulate lively discussion.

## Learning Aids

A number of learning aids have been incorporated into the text to help the reader digest the wealth of material:

- The *outline* at the beginning of each chapter provides the student with a preview and overview of what will be covered.
- *Headings* are used extensively to keep material well organized.
- Each chapter contains detailed *learning objectives* adjacent to main section headings so student readers are primed to look for skills and knowledge that will be provided therein.
- *Key terms* are identified with **purple boldface** type to indicate that these are important vocabulary items that are part of psychology's technical language.
- An *integrated running glossary* provides an on-the-spot definition of each key term as it is introduced in the text. These formal definitions are printed in **purple** type.
- An *alphabetical glossary* is found in the back of the book, as key terms are usually defined in the integrated running glossary only when they are first introduced.
- *Italics* are used liberally throughout the text to emphasize important points.
- A *chapter review* is found at the end of each chapter. Each review includes a concise summary of the chapter's key ideas, a list of the key terms that were introduced in the chapter, and a list of important theorists and researchers who were discussed in the chapter.

## Ancillary Package

Instructor resources for this product are available online. Instructor assets include an Instructor's Manual, PowerPoint® slides, and a test bank powered by Cognero®. Sign up or sign in at [www.cengage.com](http://www.cengage.com) to search for and access this product and its online resources.

## Cengage Infuse for Weiten, Dunn, and Hammer's *Psychology Applied to Modern Life*, 13th edition

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## Highlights of Content Changes in the Thirteenth Edition

To help professors who have used this book over many editions, we are providing an overview of the content changes in the current edition. The following list is not exhaustive, but it should alert faculty to most of the major changes in the book.

### Chapter 1: Adjusting to Modern Life

- New chapter-opening vignette illustrating our everyday dependence on technology
- Updated statistics on Americans' financial well-being
- New example of the paradox of progress focusing on the dark side of our digital world
- New discussion of the link between social media as a source of misinformation and polarization
- New coverage of Twenge's research linking smartphones to an increased prevalence of loneliness, depression, and suicide among teenagers and young adults
- New discussion of why smartphones may undermine well-being focusing on lost sleep, reduced in-person socializing, distraction from face-to-face interaction, social comparisons, and cyberbullying
- New coverage of what it means to seek or achieve meaning in one's life
- New research showing that reading reputable self-help books can be beneficial
- New critique of self-help books encouraging people to optimize every aspect of their lives
- New coverage of the chief advantages of the scientific approach
- New discussion of the erosion of the public's trust in science
- New analysis of the factors underlying the motivated rejection of science
- New example of naturalistic observation research method

- New example of case study research
- New example of survey research focusing on stress during the Covid-19 pandemic
- Updated evidence on the assertion that people as a whole are relatively happy
- Updated findings on the correlation between income and subjective well-being
- Updated take on the finding that money spent on experiences yields more happiness than money spent on material goods
- New coverage of psychology's increased interest in SES and how Americans overestimate social mobility
- New summary of how lower SES is associated with a host of adjustment-related outcomes
- New discussion of why lower SES correlates with poorer academic performance
- New coverage of research linking lower SES to greater empathy, compassion, altruism, and ethical behavior
- Revised discussion of the association between age and happiness
- New studies on health and happiness, as well as religion and happiness
- New discussion of the bidirectional link between relationship satisfaction and subjective well-being
- New clarification that positive and negative life events do have an impact on subjective well-being
- New research on students' propensity to be overconfident about their study preparation
- New coverage of how a growth mindset is superior to a fixed mindset in fostering academic achievement
- New discussion of the relationship between sound sleep habits and academic achievement
- New advice on why it is important for students to avoid the temptation to rush through reading assignments
- New evidence on the link between class attendance and good grades
- New research on why using laptops in class is detrimental to academic performance
- New study on the value of the method of loci as a memory aid

### Chapter 2: Theories of Personality

- New information on gender differences in the Big Five traits
- New research on how well individuals' personality traits fit with job demands influences occupational success
- New findings on how agreeableness fosters prosocial behavior
- New findings on Big Five predictors of illicit drug use
- New discussion of key traits omitted from Big Five model
- New findings on the relationship between birth order and personality
- New coverage of habits as a byproduct of operant conditioning
- New discussion of how many personal problems represent habits gone awry
- New Recommended Reading box on why habits are so hard to break
- New Adjustment & Technology box on an app for changing one's personality

- Updated overview of the correlates of self-efficacy
- New discussion of how Maslow's pyramid graphic was not created by Maslow himself
- New coverage of misconceptions regarding Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Revised assessment of the empirical status of Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- New research relating narcissism to elevated aggression
- New discussion of collective narcissism as a driver of intergroup discord
- New discussion of how collective narcissism fuels prejudice and conspiracy theories
- New coverage of the various types of perfectionism
- New discussion of the association between perfectionism and maladaptive outcomes
- New discussion of cultural variations in mean scores on the Big Five traits
- New coverage of geographical variations in typical personality in the United States

### Chapter 3: Stress and Its Effects

- Up-to-date statistics from the APA national stress survey and the WHO global mental health survey
- Inclusion of data from teens and young adults on stress and mental health
- Added definition of culture
- Expanded coverage of acculturation stress
- New feature on race-related stress
- New information about the effect of chronic stress on structural and functional changes in the brain
- New discussion of the paradigm shift from burnout to job-related depression
- Updated discussion of media exposure to trauma and PTSD
- Added differentiation between implicit and explicit social support
- New discussion of cultural differences in types of social support preferred
- Inclusion of research showing that providing social support increases well-being
- Added up-to-date recommended reading
- New feature on the impact of technostress

### Chapter 4: Coping Processes

- New discussion about why people are resistant to research findings on media violence and aggression
- New figure with updated statistics on road rage and highway shooting
- Expanded coverage of anger-related aggression
- Added critiques of the video game-aggression link based on a 2020 meta-analysis
- Added discussion of doomscrolling as related to well-being
- Updated research on reliance on defense mechanisms in response to stress
- New feature on cultural differences in help-seeking behaviors
- New section on sleep as a way to cope with stress

- New section on time in nature as an emotion-focused coping strategy
- Included new feature on mental health apps
- Described two new recommended readings related to using anxiety to achieve optimal functioning

### Chapter 5: Psychology and Physical Health

- New data on life expectancy before and after the Covid-19 pandemic
- New addition of unintended accidents to the list of main causes of mortality in the United States
- New discussion of masks and social distancing as a means to reduce illness and death during the pandemic
- New discussion of personal distress and the Type D personality
- New discussion of how to measure the Type D personality
- New discussion of the incidence and consequences of the Type D personality
- New discussion of anxiety, heart disease and the link to depression
- New discussion of the Type C personality's link to depression
- New discussion of how grieving dementia caregivers have compromised immune function
- New discussion linking unhealthy behaviors to incidence of mortality
- New discussion on how unrealistic optimism influence judgments of pandemic risk of self and others
- New discussion of smokers' ability to control smoking
- New data updates regarding who smokes and has diseases linked to smoking
- New discussion about people's use of e-cigarettes and the risks associated with vaping.
- New discussion of how quitting smoking by a certain age reduces early mortality risk
- New discussion of malleable beliefs about addiction and the ability to quit smoking
- New Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Medical Rationing, Disability, and the Pandemic**
- New discussion of increased alcohol consumption in the pandemic
- New discussion linking alcohol and marijuana use to increased driving fatalities
- New mortality data linked to alcohol consumption
- New statistics on overweight and obese citizens in the United States
- New Recommended Reading profiling **The Well-Gardened Mind: The Restorative Power of Nature**
- New discussion of lack of exercise tied to sedentary pursuits
- New discussion of weight loss and reduced health problems
- New discussion of limited weight loss and surgery due to negative actions and depression
- New statistics regarding HIV incidence rates
- New discussion of drug PrEP and HIV prevention
- New discussion of adolescent health panic when parents reinforce the sick role on them
- New Adjustment and Technology: **Telehealth**



- New data on heroin overdose deaths
- New discussion of dual dependence drugs
- New list of states where cannabis is legal

## Chapter 6: The Self

- New definition for the self that emphasizes that it is one of the most researched topics and a key aspect of adjustment
- New material on the self-concept as future oriented, tied to sexuality, and good habits
- New discussion of possible selves, success, failure, and motivation
- New research indicating that self-discrepancies can be linked to some psychiatric disorders
- New research on self-discrepancies and the anonymity of cyberspace
- New discussion of the imposter syndrome as a phenomenon related to self-discrepancies
- New discussion of and a definition for the classic self-reference effect
- New discussion of social comparisons and smartphone apps
- New discussion of positive illusions as risky when tied to unrealistic optimism
- New discussion of the Michelangelo phenomenon as a mode of successful aging
- New, expanded definition of self-esteem
- New discussion of the broad benefits of high self-esteem
- New discussion that self-concept confusion may dissipate when life transitions occur
- New discussion indicating high self-esteem is not due to academic achievement
- New discussion of why high self-esteem people can be assertive rather than aggressive
- New Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Understanding Intersectionality and the Self**
- New discussion of how spotlight effects experienced by individual from minority groups can be problematic
- New discussion that a positive explanatory style can promote well-being
- New discussion of why cancer patients might want accurate, effective forecasts
- New discussion showing that the better-than-average effect leads people to judge themselves as happier than others
- New discussion that the self-serving bias can promote selective forgetting
- New evidence that male and female sports fans engage in BIRGing and CORFing
- New Recommended Reading profiling **The Self Explained: Why and How We Become Who We Are**
- Expanded list of benefits tied to self-efficacy
- New Adjustment and Technology: **How Much Social Media Is Too Much?**
- New discussion of a downside to ingratiation as impression management
- New discussion of modesty as an effective form of self-promotion

- New discussion in the Application linking low self-esteem to eating disorders and poor romantic relationships
- New discussion of unrealistic goals as a form of perfection

## Chapter 7: Social Thinking and Social Influence

- New discussion of how masks during the pandemic influenced people perceptions of Black and White faces
- New discussion regarding how nonverbal cues can point to a person's culture of origin
- New discussion of how "bad is stronger than good" can affect accuracy of judgments.
- New discussion of social categorization based on faces.
- New discussion of social categorization as being linked to inclusion, exclusion, and intergroup differences
- New discussion of how knowledge of a person's moral character can color our judgments of their attractiveness
- New discussion and definition for ableism in Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Recognizing and Understanding Ableism**
- New discussion and definition for microaggressions in Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Recognizing and Understanding Ableism**
- New discussion of implicit bias as being linked to racism and that such bias can be assessed through available measures
- New research by Jennifer Richeson and colleagues on the misperception that both White and Black earners have regarding favorable income equality, which does not yet exist
- New discussion indicating that the fundamental attribution error can be reduced through training and perspective taking
- New discussion of defensive attributions for rape indicating that women observers believe their own vulnerability is lower
- New discussion of systemic racism as a societal, institutional, and interpersonal interaction problem
- New discussion linking implicit biases to racial prejudice
- New discussion linking religious fundamentalism and meaning in life to right-wing authoritarianism
- New discussion linking right-wing authoritarianism to negative reactions to NFL players who took a knee during the playing of the National Anthem
- New discussion of people high in right-wing authoritarianism being more susceptible to conspiracy theories and distorted news
- New discussion of people high in social dominance orientation as being opposed to apologizing for historical transgressions committed by their group toward others
- New discussion under stereotyping concerning how higher levels of prejudice against Black people in some counties is tied to State Police stopping more Black than White motorists
- New discussion of how stereotype threat in police officers may explain their overreactions to interracial encounters during public protests
- New discussion of how prejudice can be reduced if people think carefully about members of outgroups

- New discussion concerning persuasion and getting citizens to take the Covid-19 vaccine
- New Recommended Reading **Face Value: The Irresistible Influence of First Impressions**
- New discussion of source factors where trust can be undermined if a leader's opinion appears to be biased
- New discussion concerning receiver factors indicating that good mood was linked with better health advertising recall, openness to persuasion, and a plan to actually get a flu shot.
- New discussion linking the need for cognition to liking of clever word play
- New Adjustment and Technology box: **Interracial Contact in Virtual Reality**
- New discussion linking conformity behavior to people with high levels of social anxiety
- New discussion critiquing Milgram's presentation of results and his own ethical behavior
- New discussion linking the foot-in-the-door technique to increased donations for a health-related fundraising activity
- New discussion indicating a 1975 door-in-the-face study by Cialdini was recently replicated
- New discussion and definition for ableism in Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Recognizing and Understanding Ableism**
- New discussion and definition for microaggressions in Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Recognizing and Understanding Ableism**

## Chapter 8: Interpersonal Communication

- New discussion of emojis as intensifying the emotional content of digital messages
- New discussion of ambient noise as a stimulus that could interfere with message comprehension
- New mention of the importance of checking meaning and spelling of written communications
- New discussion of passive use of Social Network Sites as being linked to lower levels of well-being
- New mention of good communication as being linked to sexual satisfaction
- New Box Feature—Adjustment and Technology: **Using Social Media Wisely to Communicate Effectively**
- New discussion of nonverbal acts as promoting learning and retention of social information in communications
- New mention that nonverbal forms of deception in communication evolved with humanity
- New discussion of nonverbal communication as representing a decided form of social intelligence
- New discussion of cultural influences on discomfort with being physically too close to others
- New discussion of the size and angle of selfie photos as influencing privacy boundaries and online affirmation
- New discussion of teachers' gaze as affecting whether and how long students look at and learn from slides
- New discussion of evidence that examining people's body language along with their passport photo can be used to detect identity theft

- New evidence that caregivers' touching of infants is linked to early display of language learning
- New discussion of machine intelligence as a way to detect human lies
- New Box Feature—Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Learning How to Talk About Disability**
- New discussion of how physicians' use of self-disclosure to establish rapport with patients is linked with better health outcomes
- New discussion of when women score higher on self-disclosure and its consequences
- New discussion of effective listening as being linked with both social and self-benefits
- New mention of communication apprehension as being tied to social anxiety
- New mention that communication apprehension is often linked to low self-esteem and lower critical thinking skills
- New mention of perspective taking as a means to reduce emotional conflict
- New mention of exhibiting trust as a means for successful negotiation over a long period of time

## Chapter 9: Friendship and Love

- Updated data and figure on cosmetic surgical procedures
- Research further investigating the red-attraction link
- Expanded coverage of evolutionary explanations of attraction
- New research on the time it takes to build friendships
- Discussion of barriers for gay-straight friendships
- Updated the language for sexual orientation based on current APA standards
- New discussion of positive outcomes in breaking up
- Added new statistics on dating services
- Included updated information on loneliness since the beginning of the pandemic
- New discussion of collective loneliness
- Updated data on global increases in loneliness
- New feature on **the dark side of social media**
- New feature on friendship development in sexual minorities

## Chapter 10: Marriage and the Family

- New updated opening vignette
- Updated statistics on marriage rates, including a new figure with recent data
- Updated statistics on age of marriage by gender, including a new figure with recent data
- Updated statistics on divorce rates
- Updated statistics on breadwinning mothers
- Updated statistics on single-parent homes
- New data and figure on why people marry
- Included definitions of polygyny and polyandry
- New feature on **cultural influences on marriage**
- Updated statistics on declining birthrates
- New statistics and a figure on adults living at home as a result of the pandemic

- New research on the division of household labor for same-sex couples
- Updated statistic on mothers in the workforce
- New discussion of Gottman’s “sound relationship house” theory for relationship satisfaction
- Introduced the phenomenon of the “gray divorce revolution”
- Recent statistic on cohabitation trends
- Updated statistics related to singlehood

### Chapter 11: Gender and Behavior

- Updated the definition of gender to be in line with recommendations of the American Psychological Association
- New data and figures on gender differences in violent crime arrests
- Included the term *sex stereotypes*
- New data showing that gender stereotypes, once thought of as rigid, have changed over time
- New Department of Justice statistics on gender and violent crime
- New statistics from Nielsen on television and streaming habits during the pandemic
- Expanded coverage of gender-specific toys as a source of gender socialization
- New data on gender perceptions in children’s picture books
- New research on gendered messages in feature films aimed at children
- Research demonstrating an increase in gender-roles conformity during the pandemic
- Included a discussion of the *sexual double standard*
- New feature on the experiences and adjustment of gender nonconforming individuals
- Included a new, timely, recommended reading debunking myths of fixed gender differences

### Chapter 12: Development and Expression of Sexuality

- Updated the terminology around sexual orientation to be in line with APA’s recommendations
- New statistics and figure on parental support for sexual education by topic
- Updated statistics on mandated sex education in the United States
- Included a 2019 meta-analysis on exposure to sexual media and sexual attitudes and behaviors
- Expanded discussion of gender differences in sexual socialization and new look at potential explanations
- Expanded critique of the fixed model of sexual orientation
- Expanded coverage of prenatal hormonal determinants of sexual orientation
- Replaced the term homophobia with homophobia to align with the recommendations of APA
- Updated statistics of hate crimes based on sexual orientation
- Updated statistics on acceptance of same-sex marriage
- Included longitudinal data on friends with benefits relationships
- New data and figure with national data on sexual activities in American adults

- Updated statistics on perfect use and typical use failure rates of contraception
- New data and figure on prevalence and new incidence of STDs
- New coverage and feature on sexting
- New coverage and feature on asexuality

### Chapter 13: Careers and Work

- New discussion of Americans’ recent satisfaction ratings of their job situations
- New discussion of how Covid-19 exacerbated work and family-life balance
- New discussion of emotional intelligence as being a personal quality related to work
- New discussion of how a family’s social class can be a sociocultural barrier tied to career inequities
- New discussion of why pay level is not a good predictor of job satisfaction
- New data and discussion of how many jobs the typical American will hold in a career lifetime
- New discussion of increased Social Security payments by postponing retirement until age 70.5
- New discussion of when pay equity for women is projected to occur
- New discussion of telecommuting during Covid-19
- New discussion of telecommuting as a possible contributor to gender inequality
- New projection of how popular telecommuting (working remotely) will be in 2025
- New mention of self-direction as being an important part of lifelong learning
- New mention of Covid-19 as reducing the boundaries between home and work life
- New discussion of the incidence of job sharing as tied to organization size
- New discussion of what graduates perceive qualifies as “underemployment” or being over qualified
- New discussion of unemployment rates among LGBTQ citizens
- New discussion as to why members of minority groups may choose to keep invisible stigmas a secret in the workplace
- New discussion of employee qualities that make them open to diversity issues
- New discussion of Employee Assistance Plans (EAPs) as a means to reduce worker distress
- New mention of minorities enduring more health-related inequalities
- New discussion of burnout linked with Covid-19 and solutions
- New mention that sexual harassment also happens on college and university campuses
- New discussion indicating that men and women perceive sexually ambiguous comments differently when it comes to discerning harassment
- New discussion indicating that sexual harassment is common in some jobs; however, supportive environments can lessen its impact



- New up-to-date unemployment statistics for 2022
- New discussion of unemployment as lowering life satisfaction and income satisfaction
- New discussion that both unemployment and underemployment affected people's mental health negatively during the Covid-19 pandemic
- New data on the average length of unemployment as of March 2022
- New discussion that psychologists are split concerning whether workaholism is actually a problem
- New discussion that workaholics can display uncivil behavior
- New discussion that people who have a calling (rather than a job or a career) seem more immune to the effects of workaholism
- New discussion that more money in dual-earning couples actually makes work–family conflict worse
- New Gallup poll data on how satisfied Americans are with their available leisure time
- New discussion of how the Internet has changed how people search for jobs
- A new reminder that electronic or digital copies of resumes allow for flexible entries
- New Box Feature—Adjustment in a Diverse World: **Diversity in the U.S. Workforce and Training Issues**
- New Box Feature—Adjustment and Technology: **Understanding Zoom Fatigue**
- New discussion Case and Deaton's analysis of surging rates of deaths of despair among middle-aged, White Americans lacking college degrees
- New research on the prevalence and causes of deaths of despair
- New discussion of how rumination may contribute to a variety of disorders in addition to depression
- New coverage of predictors of long-term outcomes for schizophrenia
- Updated discussion of the dopamine hypothesis of schizophrenia
- Revised coverage of the link between cannabis use and vulnerability to schizophrenia
- New discussion of the broadened DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for autism spectrum disorder
- Revised description of autism spectrum disorder
- Updated discussion of long-term outcomes for autism spectrum disorder
- New discussion of why experts predicted a surge of psychological disorders due to the stress of the Covid-19 pandemic
- New evidence on the extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic affected the prevalence of mental disorders
- New discussion of which groups were most affected by pandemic-related stress
- New discussion of how binge-eating disorder may progress to bulimia or lead to obesity
- Revised discussion of personality and eating disorders focusing on neuroticism, perfectionism, and deficits in emotional regulation

## Chapter 14: Psychological Disorders

- New research on why biogenetic explanations of psychological disorders have increased rather than decreased their stigma
- New coverage of the Cultural Formulation Interview incorporated into DSM-5
- New data on the prevalence of specific phobias and agoraphobia
- New coverage of the nature, types, and prevalence of Internet addiction
- New discussion of Barlow's integrative model of anxiety disorders
- New evidence on the validity of case studies of dissociative amnesia
- New data on the prevalence of depressive disorders
- New discussion of uncomplicated depression as a normal reaction to major stress
- New discussion of elevated rates of depression among sexual and gender minority populations
- Added coverage of new DSM-5-TR diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder
- Added information on the distinction between bipolar I and bipolar II disorders, with updated data on their prevalence
- Revised discussion of the heritability of mood disorders
- New coverage of neuroinflammation as a contributing factor in depressive disorders
- New research on how the human microbiome may play a role in depressive disorders

## Chapter 15: Psychotherapy

- New data on the percentage of people receiving mental health services who are prescribed drugs or who receive insight or behavioral therapy
- New research on the importance of empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard in insight therapies
- New data on the association between the extent of clients' insight and the strength of the therapeutic alliance in relation to favorable treatment outcomes
- Revised discussion of virtual-reality exposure therapy
- New discussion of behavioral activation in cognitive therapy
- New findings on the possible link between anti-depressant medication and increased suicidality among young people
- New discussion of the SSRIs as first-line anti-anxiety medications
- New evidence on long-term negative effects of anti-depressant drugs
- Revised description of ECT and its prevalence
- New data on the efficacy of ECT
- New discussion of recent FDA ruling on the risk classification for ECT
- New discussion of cultural competence in relation to the treatment of minority patients
- New discussion of cultural humility as an important factor in treating ethnic clients
- New examples of computerized treatments for various disorders

- Revised evaluation of computerized/online treatments, as well as smartphone apps
- New findings on how therapy via videoconferencing and telephone compare to face-to-face treatment
- New coverage of how the Covid-19 pandemic led to a dramatic shift in the provision of therapy via online videoconferencing
- New discussion of barriers to teletherapy and challenges of teletherapy
- New discussion of how therapists and clients adapted to teletherapy
- New data on the likelihood of therapy being harmful to clients

## Chapter 16: Positive Psychology

- New material indicating that the study of well-being is about as old as the discipline of psychology
- New note that positive subjective experiences are lived in the moment
- New material that positive moods can increase working memory, so that resulting choice leads to better outcomes
- New material indicating that some people who smile genuinely all the time have chronic positive moods
- New material indicating that positive moods lead to greater creativity, which enhances job performance among those seeking to improve
- New indication that mental motion and speed of thought findings have been replicated by other labs
- New material indicating that positive emotions promote both flourishing and well-being
- New material discussing how the challenges of becoming new parents can be facilitated by positive emotions, which retain relational and family functioning
- New material linking upward spirals of positive emotions to religious activities, including prayer, meditation, and group worship
- New indication that positive emotions promote flexible mindsets
- New materials indicating that flow interventions can improve individual performance in some areas (e.g., running)
- New materials suggests that flow may have two dimensions: fluency and absorption
- New note that flow can be experienced by being absorbed in an activity
- New material links workplace flow to productivity and performance
- New indication that flow is tied to personality
- New indication that mindfulness is linked to happiness and well-being
- New Recommended Reading **The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life** by Shawn Achor (Currency, 2018)
- New material suggesting that tourists can get more out of their travel if they savor aspects of their trips
- New material suggests savoring something (an artwork) can promote well-being while reducing potential health problems
- New material implies savoring can reduce uncertainty
- New material shows that some people may have higher levels of positive affect, which means they often experience feelings of energy, enthusiasm, and cheerfulness
- New material suggesting that during the pandemic, first year college students who had higher levels of hope showed improved psychological well-being across time
- New Adjustment in a Diverse World: **A Positive Psychology of Diversity?**
- New material indicating that resilience is the typical response to trauma rather than the exception, but psychologists don't yet know how to predict who will be resilient and who won't
- New material reveals that coping with trauma is complex, so that posttraumatic growth may help people regain their accustomed level of well-being
- New material indicating that undergraduates with higher levels of grit ate healthier and slept better than those with low levels of grit.
- New indication that gratitude can be a source of mental health in stressful circumstances
- New Adjustment and Technology: **Adding Technology to Positive Psychology's Agenda**
- New material indicating that a PsycINFO search of "positive psychology" found many studies, books, and chapters
- New work on gratitude indicates it guides people's attention to other positive aspects of a given situation
- New research suggests higher levels of capitalization ward off the impact of stress and depression
- New indication that spending money on others creates social connections



## Acknowledgments

This book has been an enormous undertaking, and we want to express our gratitude to the innumerable people who have influenced its evolution. To begin with, we must cite the contribution of our students who have taken the adjustment course. It is trite to say that they have been a continuing inspiration—but they have.

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## To the Student

In most college courses, students spend more time with their textbooks than with their professors. Given this reality, it helps if you like your textbook. Making textbooks likable, however, is a tricky proposition. By its very nature, a textbook must introduce a great many new concepts, ideas, and theories. If it doesn't, it isn't much of a textbook, and instructors won't choose to use it—so you'll never see it anyway. Consequently, we have tried to make this book as likable as possible without compromising the academic content that your instructor demands. Thus, we have tried to make the book lively, informal, engaging, well-organized, easy to read, practical, and occasionally humorous. Before you plunge into Chapter 1, let us explain some of the key features that can help you get the most out of the book.

### Learning Aids

Mastering the content of this text involves digesting a great deal of information. To facilitate this learning process, we've incorporated a number of instructional aids into the book.

- *Learning objectives* designed to highlight key points and skills to be developed open each main section of the chapters.
- *Outlines* at the beginning of each chapter provide you with both a preview and an overview of what will be covered. Think of the outlines as road maps, and bear in mind that it's easier to reach a destination if you know where you're going.
- *Headings* are used extensively to keep material well organized.
- *Key terms* are identified with **purple boldface** type to indicate that these are important vocabulary items that are part of psychology's technical language. The key terms introduced on a page are also listed at the bottom of each page.
- An integrated *running glossary* provides an on-the-spot definition of each key term as it's introduced in the text. These formal definitions are printed in **purple typeface** type. It is often difficult for students to adapt to the jargon used by scientific disciplines. However, learning this terminology is an essential part of your educational experience. The integrated running glossary is meant to make this learning process as painless as possible.
- An *alphabetical glossary* is provided at the back of the book, as key terms are usually defined in the running glossary only when they are first introduced. If you run into a technical term that was introduced in an earlier chapter and you can't remember its meaning, you can look it up in the alphabetical glossary instead of backtracking to find the place where it first appeared.
- *Italics* are used liberally throughout the book to emphasize important points.

- A *chapter review* near the end of each chapter includes a thorough summary of the chapter and lists key terms and important theorists, with page references. Reading over these review materials can help ensure that you've digested the key points in the chapter.

- Each chapter ends with a ten-item *practice test* that should give you a realistic assessment of your mastery of that chapter and valuable practice taking multiple-choice tests that will probably be representative of what you will see in class (if your instructor uses the test bank designed for this book).

### Recommended Reading Boxes

This text should function as a resource book. To facilitate this goal, particularly interesting self-help books on various topics are highlighted in boxes within the chapters. Each box provides a brief description of the book. We do not agree with everything in these recommended books, but all of them are potentially useful or intriguing. The main purpose of this feature is to introduce you to some of the better self-help books that are available.

### Personal Explorations Workbook

The *Personal Explorations Workbook*, which can be found at the very back of the text, contains interesting, thought-provoking experiential exercises for each chapter. These exercises are designed to help you achieve personal insights. The Self-Assessment exercises are psychological tests or scales that you can take, so you can see how you score on various traits discussed in the text. The Self-Reflection exercises consist of questions intended to help you think about issues in your personal life in relation to concepts and ideas discussed in the text. Many students find these exercises to be quite interesting, even fun. Hence, we encourage you to use the *Personal Explorations Workbook*.

### A Concluding Note

We sincerely hope that you find this book enjoyable. If you have any comments or advice that might help us improve the next edition, please write to us in care of the publisher, Cengage. Finally, let us wish you good luck. We hope you enjoy your course and learn a great deal.

Wayne Weiten

Dana S. Dunn

Elizabeth Yost Hammer



# Chapter 1



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## Adjusting to Modern Life

### 1.1 The Paradox of Progress

**Adjustment and Technology** Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

### 1.2 The Search for Direction

Self-Help Books  
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### 1.3 The Psychology of Adjustment

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What Is Adjustment?

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What Isn't Very Important?

**Adjustment in a Diverse World** The Psychological Ramifications of Socioeconomic Status

What Is Somewhat Important?

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Conclusions

**Recommended Reading** *Stumbling on Happiness* by Daniel Gilbert

### 1.6 Application: Improving Academic Performance

Changing Your Mindset  
Developing Sound Study Habits  
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Applying Memory Principles

### Review

### Practice Test

The alarm on your smartwatch goes off, wrenching you out of a pleasant slumber. You groan and tap the snooze button to snag a few more minutes of tranquility. After the next alarm you sigh and force yourself to awaken. Out of curiosity, you access an app on your watch that will give you a readout on the quantity and quality of last night's sleep. Your results look good. You should feel energetic today. Then you use your watch to check your calendar for the day. It is a tad daunting, but it could be far worse. Curious again, you tap the activity app on your watch to find out how many steps you racked up yesterday. Not enough, you will need to do better today. You grab your smartphone off the nightstand. You check out two

websites that you tend to rely on for a quick overview of the national news, and then a social media site that you can't get enough of. After that, you consult the weather forecast. Unfortunately, it is going to be much colder than yesterday. From there you move on to your email to ascertain what has come in so far. One of the emails requires a quick response, so you text a colleague to straighten out a misunderstanding. You have not even made it out of bed yet, but you have just taken advantage of a host of technological triumphs that would have seemed amazing 15 or 20 years ago. If you had had more time, you could have paid some bills, indulged in some shopping, and checked the traffic for your commute.

## 1.1 The Paradox of Progress

- LO1** Describe three examples of the paradox of progress.
- LO2** Explain what is meant by the paradox of progress and how theorists have explained it.

We live in an age of technology. We may take for granted impressive feats such as tracking our daily sleep and exercise, communicating instantly with colleagues, and effortlessly having access to an infinite world of information at our fingertips. After all, we live in a time of unparalleled progress. Modern Western society has made extraordinary strides in transportation, energy, communication, agriculture, and medicine. Yet despite our technological advances, social problems and personal difficulties seem more prevalent and more prominent than ever before. This paradox is evident in many aspects of contemporary life, as seen in the following examples.

**Point.** *The range of life choices available to people in modern societies has increased exponentially in recent decades.* For example, Barry Schwartz (2004, 2020) describes how a simple visit to a local supermarket can require a consumer to choose from 285 varieties of cookies, 61 suntan lotions, 150 lipsticks, and 175 salad dressings. Although increased choice is most tangible in the realm of consumer goods and services, Schwartz argues that it also extends into more significant domains of life. Today, people tend to have unprecedented opportunities to make choices about how they will be educated (vastly more flexible college curricula are available, not to mention online delivery systems), how and where they will work (telecommuting

presents employees with all sorts of new choices), how their intimate relationships will unfold (people have increased freedom to delay marriage, cohabit, not have children, and so forth), and even how they will look (advances in plastic surgery have made personal appearance a matter of choice).

**Counterpoint.** *Although increased choice sounds attractive, research suggests that an overabundance of choices has unexpected costs.* Studies suggest that when people have too many choices, they experience “choice overload” and struggle with decisions (White & Hoffrage, 2009). Having lots of choices does not *always* lead to choice overload, but it



Barry Schwartz argues that people in modern societies are faced with choice overload. He maintains that the endless choices people are presented with lead them to waste countless hours weighing trivial decisions and ruminating about whether their decisions were optimal.



is a common phenomenon, especially when the choice set is complex, the decision task is difficult, and there is uncertainty about one's preferences (Chernev, Böckenholt, & Goodman, 2015). Schwartz asserts that when choice overload occurs, it increases the potential for rumination, postdecision regret, and anticipated regret. Ultimately, he argues, the malaise associated with choice overload undermines individuals' happiness and contributes to depression.

**Point.** *Thanks in large part to technological advances, we live in an era of extraordinary affluence.* Undeniably, there are pockets of genuine poverty, but social critics argue convincingly that in North America and Europe the middle and upper classes are larger and wealthier than ever before, and extreme poverty has declined (Easterbrook, 2003; Pinker, 2018; Whybrow, 2005). Most of us take for granted things that were once considered luxuries, such as color television and air-conditioning. Many homes bulge with possessions even though the average size of new homes in the United States has doubled since the 1970s (de Graaf, Wann, & Naylor, 2014). The amount of money spent on luxury goods continues to increase at a rapid pace.

**Counterpoint.** *In spite of this economic abundance, research suggests that most people do not feel very good about their financial well-being.* For example, one survey found that 60% of Americans feel somewhat or very stressed about finances (APA, 2021). Another 2021 survey conducted by the Federal Reserve found that 35% of respondents could not cover an emergency expense of \$400 without borrowing money. A huge part of the problem is that recent decades have seen a dramatic increase in *income inequality* (Horowitz, Igienik, & Kochhar, 2020; Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2012). Moreover, the tone of public discourse about inequality has taken a cruel turn, as those with great wealth are often idolized, whereas those in poverty are frequently demonized and blamed for their fate (Wise, 2015). Ironically, however, those who embrace materialism are not necessarily all that satisfied with their lives (Kasser, 2016). An analysis of 151 studies revealed that people who score high in materialism tend to report somewhat lower levels of subjective well-being than others (Dittmar et al., 2014). Why might materialism undermine well-being? One line of thinking is that the pursuit of material success can crowd out other experiences (leisure activities, time with family, exercise, and so forth) that satisfy important psychological needs and contribute to well-being.

**Point.** *As our chapter-opening anecdote discussed, digital technology has provided many of us with remarkable new capabilities and conveniences and has exponentially enhanced*

*our access to information and our ability to communicate with others.* Think about it; a modest, little smartphone can function as an answering machine, a phone book, a camera, a calculator, a calendar, a street map, a flashlight, a compass, a video player, a photo album, and a gaming console, among many other things. How convenient is that? Thanks to computer technology, we can work effectively, we can shop 24/7, we can pursue our educational goals through online courses, and we can enjoy endless entertainment options without leaving the comfort of our homes. Social media have dramatically enhanced the connectivity among people, allowing people who do not live near each other to create all sorts of online communities that can be beneficial in countless ways.

**Counterpoint.** *Unfortunately, our digital world also has a dark side, as it can contribute to depression, misinformation, and polarization.* There is room for debate about causation, but research suggests that smartphones and social media may be contributing to a rise in loneliness and depression among adolescents, especially females (Twenge & Martin, 2020). The detrimental effects appear to be correlated with heavy use of social media, rather than gaming, texting, emailing, or watching videos (McAllister et al., 2021). Another concern is that social media websites can foster the rapid spread of misinformation (Ecker et al., 2022; Menczer & Hills, 2020). Obviously, there was an ample supply of misinformation circulating long before the advent of the Internet, but social media make it easy for anyone to post dubious information, and false rumors generally spread more quickly and more widely than accurate information (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018). The unprecedented reach of social media provides an optimal medium for spreading misinformation (Wardle, 2019). Although social media companies have spent billions of dollars to reduce the dissemination of obviously inaccurate information, its prevalence continues to increase (Alba, 2020). Unfortunately, misinformation can be very persuasive, especially when it fits with one's views (Traberg & van der Linden, 2022). The online epidemic of misinformation has contributed to yet another social problem, growing polarization in the United States and many other countries. We tend to think of polarization as a political issue, but evidence indicates that perceptions of polarization undermine Americans' trust in one another (Lee, 2022), which becomes a psychological issue. Anyone who has experienced a divisive, belligerent family gathering ruined by political debates can appreciate the psychological fallout of polarization. Moreover, research suggests that individuals who perceive polarization to be high exhibit elevated vulnerability to depressive disorders (Nayak et al., 2021).

All these apparent contradictions reflect the same theme: *The technological advances of the past century,*

## Adjustment and Technology

### Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?

“Have smartphones destroyed a generation?” was the title of a magazine article in *The Atlantic* written by Jean Twenge (2017), a social psychologist who has published a great deal of influential research on changes in behavioral tendencies across generations (Twenge, 2000, 2008, 2015). What led to such an ominous title? Twenge notes that the prevalence of depression and suicide among teenagers started increasing sharply around 2012 (Keyes et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2018). After considering various possible explanations, she pinned the blame on smartphones, asserting in *The Atlantic* article that “The arrival of the smartphone has radically changed every aspect of teenagers’ lives, from the nature of their social interactions to their mental health.” Twenge goes on to note that 2012 was the year in which the portion of Americans who had smartphones passed 50%, a trend that accelerated to the point where 95% of U.S. teenagers had smartphones by 2018. Unfortunately, adolescents’ increasing adoption of smartphones in the 2010s was accompanied by a decline in life satisfaction and increases in depression and suicide (Twenge, Martin, & Campbell, 2018). These survey results were mirrored by spikes in hospital emergency room admissions among adolescents for self-harm behaviors and suicide attempts (Kalb et al., 2019; Mercado, Holland, & Leemis, 2017).

Of course, the fact that smartphone usage and depression/suicide have risen together over time does not prove that smartphones are the cause of teenagers’ upsurge in angst. However, the case against smartphones has been bolstered by extensive evidence that the amount of time adolescents and young adults spend daily on smartphones or other digital devices is predictive of their levels of well-being, loneliness, depression, and risk for suicide, with stronger associations observed for females (Boers et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2019; Twenge & Campbell, 2019; Twenge & Farley, 2020).

What might account for the link between smartphones and adolescents’ well-being? First, smartphone use is associated with

decreases in sleep duration and quality (Twenge, Hisler, & Krizan, 2019). Inadequate sleep is known to undermine well-being. Second, smartphone use appears to have led to a decline in the time that teens allocate to other activities that might be more beneficial to their mental health, including spending time (in person) with friends, working at a job, exercising, or enjoying the outdoors (Twenge, 2019; Twenge, Spitzberg, & Campbell, 2019). Third, when individuals do get together with others, their obsessions with their smartphones often undermine the emotional benefits of face-to-face interaction by preventing them from giving full attention to their friends and family (Kushlev, Dwyer, & Dunn, 2019). Fourth, time spent on social media sites may expose young people to all the events they were not invited to, fostering feelings of loneliness and being left out (Twenge, 2017). Moreover, people on social media tend to portray their lives in unrealistically favorable ways that can trigger envy and despondent reactions in fragile teenagers (Steers, Wickham, & Acitelli, 2014). Fifth, teenagers are known to engage in cyberbullying on social networking sites, which presents another significant threat to the well-being of some (Viner et al., 2019).

So, have smartphones really *destroyed* a generation? Well, magazines sell copies by running with provocative titles. Twenge’s scientific publications do not use such dramatic language, which clearly represents something of an overstatement. And Twenge (2019) has readily acknowledged that we need more research to firmly establish a causal relationship between smartphones and the declines in adolescents’ well-being. There are some social scientists who disagree with Twenge’s analyses (Orben & Przybylski, 2019; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2017), although she has published persuasive rebuttals (Twenge, 2019, 2020). Nonetheless, the research in this area raises some serious concerns about the potential impact of smartphones, especially among adolescents and young adults.

*impressive though they may be, have not led to perceptible improvement in our collective health and happiness.* Indeed, many social critics argue that the quality of our lives and our sense of personal fulfillment have declined rather than increased. This is the paradox of progress.

What is the cause of this paradox? Many explanations have been offered. Micki McGee (2005) suggests that modern changes in gender roles, diminished job stability, and other social trends have fostered an obsession with self-improvement that ultimately undermines many individuals’ sense of security and satisfaction with their identity. Edward Hallowell (2006) argues that people in modern societies tend to be “crazy busy” and so overwhelmed by information overload that many feel like they experience symptoms of attention deficit disorder. Sherry Turkle (2011) asserts that in our modern, digital, socially networked world, we spend more

and more time with technology and less and less time with one another. The resulting sense of loneliness and isolation just deepen people’s dependence on superficial communication in the online world, leaving an increasing number of people experiencing an intimacy deficit. John De Graaf, David Wann, and Thomas Naylor (2014) argue that people in modern consumer societies experience “affluenza,” a compulsive need to accumulate more stuff, better stuff, and newer stuff. They assert that this unbridled consumerism fuels a pernicious cycle of overconsumption, snowballing debt, and escalating stress and anxiety, which undermine individuals’ physical health, as well as their emotional well-being.

Whatever the explanation, many theorists, working from varied perspectives, agree that *a major challenge of modern life has become the search for meaning* (Dolby, 2005; Emmons, 2003; Frankl, 1992; Herbert &



Brandsma, 2015; Kass, 2017). What does it mean to seek or achieve meaning in one's life? Theories vary, but one influential model (Heintzelman & King, 2014) identifies three key components of meaning in life: *purpose* (having goals and direction), *significance* (believing one's life has value), and *coherence* (feeling that one's life makes sense). Research provides some support for the assertion that meaningfulness is a key contributor to psychological well-being, as it correlates with physical health, increased longevity, reduced stress, and more adaptive coping (Hooker, Masters, & Park, 2018). Interestingly, studies suggest that reports of feeling meaningfulness in life may not be as rare or elusive as some theorists have worried they might be (King, Heintzelman, & Ward, 2016). Although that finding is encouraging, we will discuss in the next section that a substantial number of people struggle to achieve meaning in life.

## 1.2 The Search for Direction

- LO3** Provide some examples of people's search for direction.
- LO4** Describe some common problems with self-help books and what to look for in quality self-help books.
- LO5** Summarize the philosophy underlying this textbook.

We live in a time of unparalleled social and technological mutation. According to a number of social critics, the kaleidoscope of change that we see around us creates feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, which we try to alleviate by searching for a sense of direction. This search for meaning can manifest itself in many ways, some of which are less than optimal.

For example, we could discuss how hundreds of thousands of Americans have invested large sums of money to enroll in "self-realization" programs such as Scientology, Silva Mind Control, John Gray's Mars and Venus relationship seminars, and Tony Robbins's Life Mastery seminars. These programs typically promise to provide profound enlightenment and quickly turn one's life around. Many participants claim that the programs have revolutionized their lives. However, most experts characterize such programs as intellectually bankrupt, and book and magazine exposés reveal them as simply lucrative money-making schemes (Behar, 1991; Pressman, 1993). In a particularly scathing analysis of these programs, Steve Salerno (2005) outlines the enormous financial benefits reaped by their inventors, such as Tony Robbins (\$80 million in annual income), Dr. Phil (\$20 million in annual income), and John Gray (\$50,000 per speech). More than anything else, the enormous success of these self-help gurus and self-realization programs demonstrates just how desperate some people are for a sense of direction and purpose in their lives.

If you would like a more mundane, everyday example of people's search for direction, you need look no farther than your satellite radio (or podcast), where you will find the long-running, highly popular show of "Dr. Laura" Schlessinger, who doles out advice to millions of listeners. An astonishing tens of thousands of people reach out each day to seek her unique brand of blunt, outspoken, judgmental advice. Dr. Laura, who is not a psychologist or psychiatrist (her doctorate is in physiology), analyzes callers' problems in more of a moral than psychological framework. Unlike most therapists, she is confrontational, manifests little empathy for callers, and preaches to the audience about how they ought to lead their lives (Arkowitz & Lilienfeld, 2010). In an editorial in *Psychology Today*, Robert Epstein (2001) concluded that "no legitimate mental health professional would ever give the kind of hateful, divisive advice that Schlessinger doles out daily" (p. 5). Yet, the remarkable popularity of her highly prescriptive advice demonstrates once again that many people are eager for guidance and direction.

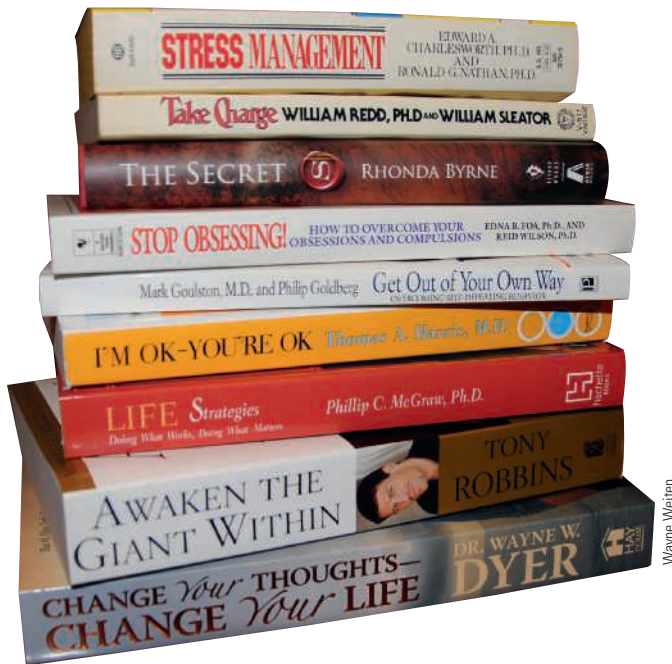
Although there are countless examples of people's search for a sense of direction that we could discuss, we will reserve our in-depth analysis for a manifestation of this search that is even more germane to our focus on everyday adjustment: the spectacular success of bestselling "self-help" books.

### Self-Help Books

Americans spend over a billion dollars annually on "self-help books" that offer do-it-yourself treatments for common personal problems (Raymond et al., 2016). This fascination with self-improvement is nothing new. For decades American readers have displayed a voracious appetite for self-help books such as:

- *I'm OK—You're OK* (Harris, 1967)
- *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* (Chopra, 1993)
- *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and It's All Small Stuff* (Carlson, 1997)
- *The Secret* (Byrne, 2006)
- *Become a Better You: Seven Keys to Improving Your Life Every Day* (Osteen, 2009)
- *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* (Duhigg, 2012)
- *You're Stronger Than You Think* (Parrott, 2012)
- *Rising Strong* (Brown, 2015)
- *Love Yourself First* (Laughter, 2020)
- *The Power of Self-Discipline* (Hollins, 2021)
- *Set Boundaries, Find Peace* (Tawwab, 2021).

With their simple recipes for achieving happiness, the authors of these books have generally not been timid about promising to change the quality of the readers' lives. Unfortunately, merely reading a book is not likely to turn your life around. If only it were that easy! If only someone could



Wayne Weiten

Self-help books have a long history, but their popularity began to spike back in the 1970s. Although they are especially big sellers in the United States, they are not a uniquely American phenomenon. Self-help books are widely read in many Western cultures.

hand you a book that would solve all your problems! If the consumption of these literary narcotics were even remotely as helpful as their publishers claim, we would be a nation of serene, happy, well-adjusted people. It is clear, however, that serenity is not the dominant national mood. The multitude of self-help books that crowd bookstore shelves represents just one more symptom of our collective distress and our search for the elusive secret of happiness.

### The Value of Self-Help Books

It is somewhat unfair to lump all self-help books together for a critique because they vary widely in quality. Many provide sound advice, but a substantial portion include potentially harmful guidance (Redding et al., 2009; Richards & Farrand, 2010). Surveys exploring psychotherapists' opinions of self-help books suggest that there are some excellent books that offer authentic insights (Bergsma, 2008). Many therapists encourage their patients to read carefully selected self-help books. A number of studies have found that subjects who read evidence-based self-help books (one or two specific, reputable books in each study) showed meaningful improvements in mental health (Hofer et al., 2018; Krafft, Twohig, & Levin, 2020; Levin, Davis, & Twohig, 2020). Thus, it would be foolish to dismiss all these books as shallow drivel. In fact, some of the better self-help books are highlighted in the Recommended Reading boxes that appear throughout this text. Unfortunately, however, the gems are easily lost in the mountains of rubbish. A great

many self-help books offer little of real value to the reader. Generally, they face five fundamental shortcomings.

First, they are dominated by “psychobabble.” The term *psychobabble*, coined by R. D. Rosen (1977), seems appropriate to describe the “hip” but hopelessly vague language used in many of these books. Statements such as “It’s beautiful if you’re unhappy,” “You’ve got to get in touch with yourself,” “You have to be up front,” “You gotta be you ‘cause you’re you,” and “You need a real high-energy experience” are typical examples of this language. At best, such terminology is ill-defined; at worst, it is meaningless. Clarity is sacrificed in favor of a jargon that prevents, rather than enhances, effective communication.

The second problem is that self-help books tend to place more emphasis on sales than on scientific soundness. The vast majority of these books are not based on solid scientific research (Madsen, 2015). Even when books are based on well-researched therapeutic programs, interventions that are effective with professional supervision may not be effective when self-administered (Rosen et al., 2015). Moreover, even when responsible authors provide scientifically valid advice, sales-hungry publishers routinely slap over-hyped, irresponsible promises on the books’ covers, often to the dismay of the authors.

The third shortcoming is that self-help books don’t usually provide explicit directions about how to change your behavior. These books tend to be smoothly written and “touchingly human” in tone. They often strike responsive chords in the reader by aptly describing a common problem that many of us experience. The reader says, “Yes, that’s me!” Unfortunately, when the book focuses on how to deal with the problem, it usually provides only a vague distillation of simple common sense, which could be covered in 2 rather than 200 pages. These books often fall back on inspirational cheerleading in the absence of sound, explicit advice.

Fourth, many of these books encourage a remarkably self-centered, narcissistic approach to life (Justman, 2005). **Narcissism is a personality trait marked by an inflated sense of importance, a need for attention and admiration, a sense of entitlement, and a tendency to exploit others.** Although there are plenty of exceptions, the basic message in many self-help books is “Do whatever you feel like doing, and don’t worry about the consequences for other people.”

The fifth shortcoming is that in recent years self-help books have started encouraging people to relentlessly *optimize* every aspect of their lives. As Schwartz (2018) puts it, “We must now chart our progress, count our steps, log our sleep rhythms, tweak our diets, record our negative thoughts—then analyze the data, recalibrate, and repeat.” Some social critics (Brinkmann, 2017; Storr, 2018) worry that this obsession with self-improvement may backfire

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**Key term:** Narcissism

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by creating self-imposed pressures that are impossible to meet. Their concerns may have merit, as an extensive body of research has linked perfectionism to an elevated risk for depression, eating disorders, marital problems, and even suicide (de Jonge-Heesen et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2022).

### What to Look for in Self-Help Books

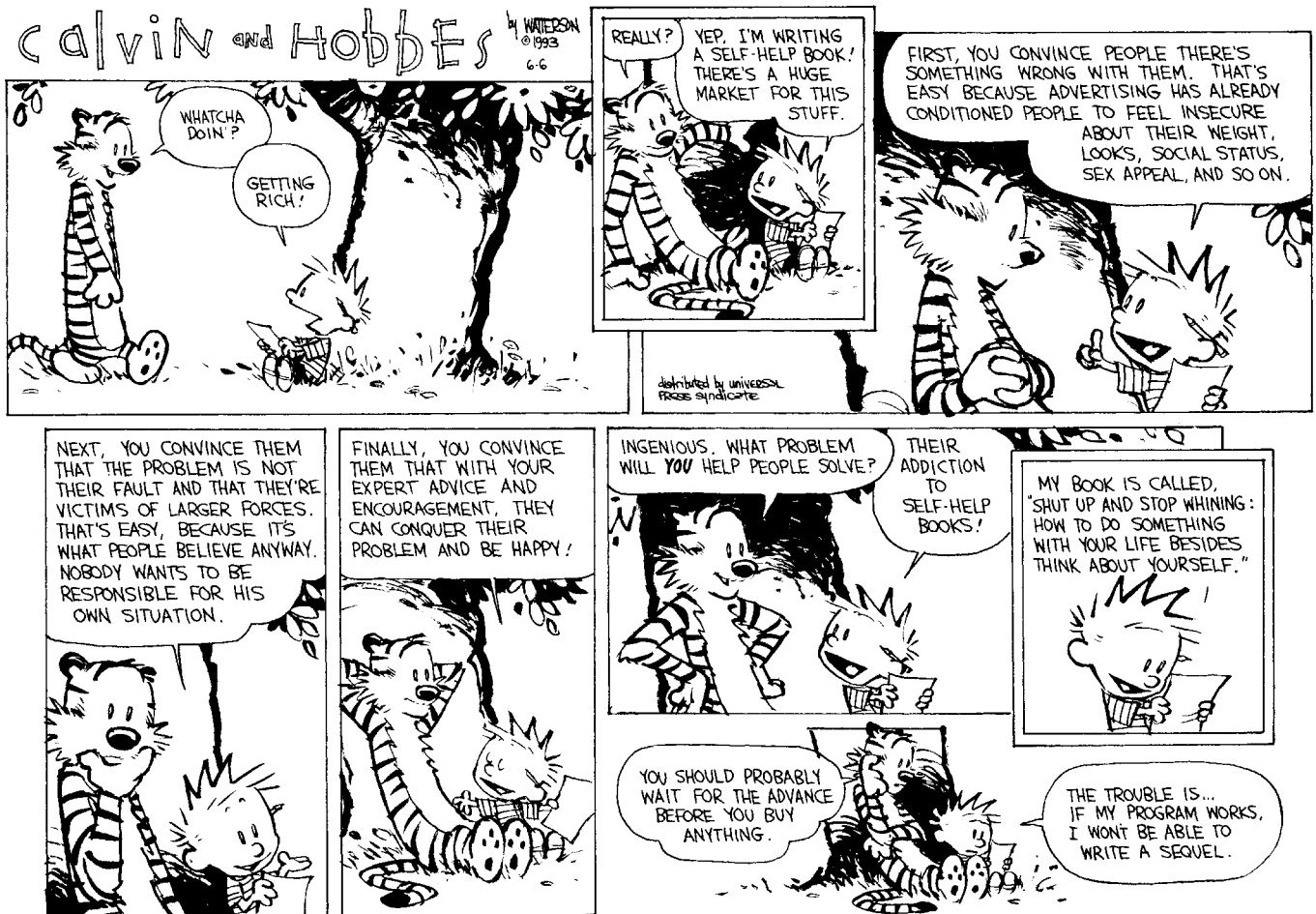
Because self-help books vary so widely in quality, it seems a good idea to provide you with some guidelines about what to look for in seeking genuinely helpful books. The following thoughts give you some criteria for judging books of this type (Norcross et al., 2013).

1. This may sound backward, but look for books that do not promise too much in the way of immediate change. The truly useful books tend to be appropriately cautious in their promises and realistic about the challenge of altering your behavior. As Arkowitz and Lilienfeld (2006) put it, “Be wary of books that make promises that they obviously cannot keep, such as curing a phobia in five minutes or fixing a failing marriage in a week” (p. 79).

2. Try to check out the credentials of the author or authors. Book jackets will often exaggerate the expertise of authors, but these days a quick Internet search can often yield more objective biographical information and perhaps some perceptive reviews of the book.

3. Try to select books that mention, at least briefly, the theoretical or research basis for the program they advocate. It is understandable that you may not be interested in a detailed summary of research that supports a particular piece of advice. However, you should be interested in whether the advice is based on published research, widely accepted theory, anecdotal evidence, clinical interactions with patients, or pure speculation by the author. Books that are based on more than personal anecdotes and speculation should have a list of references in the back (or at the end of each chapter).

4. Look for books that provide detailed, explicit directions about how to alter your behavior. Generally, these directions represent the crucial core of the book. If they are inadequate in detail, you have been shortchanged.



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5. More often than not, books that focus on a particular kind of problem, such as overeating, loneliness, or marital difficulties, deliver more than those that promise to cure all of life's problems with a few simple ideas. Books that cover everything and offer simple recipes for solving an endless list of problems tend to be the bestsellers (Bergsma, 2008), but they usually are superficial and disappointing. Books that devote a great deal of thought to a particular type of problem tend to be written by authors with genuine expertise on that topic. Such books are more likely to pay off for you.

## The Approach of This Textbook

Clearly, living in our complex, modern society is a formidable challenge. This book is about that challenge. It is about you. It is about life. Specifically, it summarizes the scientific research on human behavior that appears relevant to the challenge of living effectively in contemporary society.

This text deals with the same kinds of problems addressed by self-help books, self-realization programs, and popular media “therapists.” However, it makes no boldly seductive promises about turning your life around or helping you achieve tranquility. Such promises simply aren't realistic. Psychologists have long recognized that changing a person's behavior is a difficult challenge, fraught with frustration and failure (Seligman, 1994).

That said, we would not be writing this textbook if we did not believe it could be beneficial to our readers, but it is important that you have realistic expectations. Reading this textbook will not be a revelatory experience. All it can do is give you some useful information and point you in some potentially beneficial directions. The rest is up to you. In view of our criticisms of self-realization programs and self-help books, it seems essential that we explicitly lay out the philosophy that underlies the writing of this textbook. The following statements summarize the assumptions and goals of this textbook:

1. *This textbook is based on the premise that accurate knowledge about the principles of psychology can be of value to you in everyday life.* It has been said that knowledge is power. Greater awareness of why people behave as they do should help you in interacting with others as well as in trying to understand yourself.

2. *This textbook attempts to foster a critical attitude about psychological issues and to enhance your critical thinking skills.* Information is important, but people also need to develop effective strategies for evaluating information. Critical thinking involves subjecting ideas to systematic, skeptical scrutiny. Critical thinkers ask tough questions, such as: What exactly is being asserted? What

assumptions underlie this assertion? What evidence or reasoning supports this assertion? Is there contradictory evidence? Are there alternative explanations? We have already attempted to demonstrate the importance of a critical attitude in our evaluation of self-help books, and we'll continue to model critical thinking strategies throughout the text.

3. *This textbook should open doors.* The coverage in this textbook is broad; we tackle many topics. Therefore, in some places it may lack the depth or detail that you would like. However, you should think of it as a resource that can introduce you to other books, techniques, or therapies, which you can then pursue on your own.

## 1.3 The Psychology of Adjustment

**LO6** Describe the two key facets of psychology.

**LO7** Explain the concept of adjustment.

Now that we have spelled out our approach in writing this text, it is time to turn to the task of introducing you to some basic concepts. In this section, we'll discuss the nature of psychology and the concept of adjustment.

### What Is Psychology?

**Psychology** is the science that studies behavior and the physiological and mental processes that underlie it, and it is the profession that applies the accumulated knowledge of this science to practical problems. Psychology leads a complex dual existence as both a *science* and a *profession*. Let's examine the science first. Psychology is an area of scientific study, much like biology or physics. Whereas biology focuses on life processes and physics focuses on matter and energy, psychology focuses on *behavior* and *related mental and physiological processes*.

**Behavior** is any overt (observable) response or activity by an organism. Psychology does *not* confine itself to the study of human behavior. Many psychologists believe that the principles of behavior are much the same for all animals, including humans. As a result, these psychologists often prefer to study animals—mainly because they can exert more control over the factors influencing the animals' behavior.

Psychology is also interested in the mental processes—the thoughts, feelings, and wishes—that accompany behavior. Mental processes are more difficult to study than behavior because they are private and not directly observable. However, they exert critical influence over

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**Key terms:** Psychology, Behavior

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