

## Chapter 15

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# Personality and Social Interaction

### Three Mechanisms of Social Interaction

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- ▣ Selection
- ▣ Evocation
- ▣ Manipulation

## Selection

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- ▣ Personality characteristics of others influence whether we select them as dates, friends, or marriage partners
- ▣ Own personality characteristics play role in kinds of situations we select to enter and stay in

## Personality Characteristics Desired in a Marriage Partner (Buss et al., 1990)

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- ▣ Over 10,000 participants, from 37 samples in 33 countries, six continents, five islands
- ▣ Mutual attraction/love is the most favored characteristic

## Personality Characteristics Desired in a Marriage Partner (Buss et al., 1990)

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- ▣ Almost as important are personality characteristics of
  - dependable character,
  - emotional stability,
  - pleasing disposition

## Do Opposites Attract? Assortative Mating for Personality

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- ▣ Assortative mating: People are married to people who are similar to themselves
- ▣ Are these positive correlations caused by active selection of mates who are similar, or by-products of other causal processes (e.g., sheer proximity)?...

## Assortative Mating for Personality: The Search for the Similar

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- ▣ To answer questions, Botwin et al. (1997) studied dating and married couples
  - Correlated preferences for personality characteristics desired in a potential mate, and our own personality characteristics
  - Correlations are consistently positive: Positive correlations between spouses are due, in part, to direct social preferences, based on personality characteristics of those doing the selecting

## Do People Get the Mates They Want?

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- ▣ Botwin et al. (1997): Correlations between preferences for ideal personality characteristics in a mate and the actual personality characteristics of an obtained mate

## Do People Get the Mates They Want?

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- ▣ Consistently positive correlations: People seem to get mates they want in terms of personality
- ▣ Partner's personality had a large effect on marital satisfaction

## Do People Get the Mates They Want?

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- ▣ People are especially happy if they are married to partners high on agreeableness, emotional stability, and openness
- ▣ But difference in scores between partner's personality and one's ideal for that personality did not predict happiness

## Personality and the Selective Breakup of Couples

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- ▣ According to violation of desire theory (Buss, 1994), break-ups should be more common when one's desires are violated than when they are fulfilled
- ▣ People actively seek mates who are dependable and emotionally stable, and those who fail to choose such mates are at risk for divorce

## Personality and the Selective Breakup of Couples

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- ▣ Those who fail to get what they want—including a mate who is similar—tend to selectively break-up more often than those who get what they want

## Shyness and the Selection of Risky Situations

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- ▣ Shyness: Tendency to feel tense, worried, and anxious during social interactions or even when anticipating social interactions
- ▣ During adolescence, early adulthood, shy people tend to avoid social situations, resulting in a form of isolation

## Shyness and the Selection of Risky Situations

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- ▣ Shy women are less likely to go to a gynecologist
- ▣ Shy women also are less likely to bring up contraception with potential sexual partner

## Shyness and the Selection of Risky Situations

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- ▣ Shyness affects whether a person is willing to select risky situations in the form of gambles
- ▣ Shyness, in short, has a substantial impact on selective entry into, or avoidance of, situations

## Other Personality Traits and the Selection of Situations

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- ▣ Personality affects situations to which people are exposed through selective entry into, or avoidance of, certain activities



## Evocation

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- ▣ Personality characteristics of others evoke responses in us
- ▣ Own personality characteristics evoke responses in others
- ▣ Once we select others to occupy our social environment, second class of processes set into motion—evocation of reactions from others and evocation of our own reactions by others

## Aggression and the Evocation of Hostility

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- ▣ Aggressive people evoke hostility from others
- ▣ Hostile attributional bias: Tendency to infer hostile intent on the part of others in the face of uncertain behavior from others

## Aggression and the Evocation of Hostility

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- ▣ Because they expect others to be hostile, aggressive people treat others aggressively—people treated aggressively tend to aggress back
- ▣ Thus, hostility from others is evoked by an aggressive person

## Evocation of Anger and Upset in Partners

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- ▣ Person can perform actions that cause emotional response in a partner
- ▣ Person can elicit actions from another that upset the original elicitor

## Evocation of Anger and Upset in Partners

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- ▣ Study by Buss (1991): Role of personality on evocation of anger and upset in married couples
  - Assessed personality characteristics of husbands and wives
  - Strongest predictors of upset are low agreeableness and emotional instability

## Evocation Through Expectancy Confirmation

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- ▣ Expectancy confirmation: People's beliefs about personality characteristics of others cause them to evoke in others actions that are consistent with initial beliefs

## Evocation Through Expectancy Confirmation

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- ▣ Snyder and Swann (1978): People's beliefs led them to behave in an aggressive manner toward an unsuspecting target, then the target behaved in a more aggressive manner, confirming initial beliefs

## Manipulation

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- ▣ Personality is linked to ways in which we try to influence or manipulate others
- ▣ Manipulation or social influence includes ways in which people intentionally alter, change, or exploit others

## Manipulation

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- Manipulation can be examined from two perspectives within personality psychology
  - Are some individuals consistently more manipulative than others?
  - Given that all people attempt to influence others, do stable personality characteristics predict tactics that are used?

## A Taxonomy of 11 Tactics of Manipulation (Buss et al., 1987)

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- Developed through a two-step procedure
- Nominations of acts of influence
- Factor analysis of self-reports and observer-reports of nominated acts
- 11 tactics identified, including charm, coercion, silent treatment, reason

## Sex Differences in Tactics of Manipulation

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- ▣ With exception of regression (crying, whining), men and women are similar in performance of tactics of manipulation

## Personality Predictors of Tactics of Manipulation

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- ▣ High surgency: Coercion, responsibility invocation
- ▣ Low surgency: Self-abasement, hardball
- ▣ High agreeable: Pleasure induction, reason

## Personality Predictors of Tactics of Manipulation

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- ▣ Low agreeable: Coercion, silent treatment
- ▣ High conscientiousness: Reason
- ▣ Emotionally unstable people use a variety of tactics to manipulate others, but the most common is regression

## Personality Predictors of Tactics of Manipulation

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- ▣ High intellect-openness: Reason, pleasure induction, responsibility invocation
- ▣ Low intellect-openness: Social comparison

## The Machiavellian Personality: A Closer Look

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- ▣ Machiavellianism: Manipulative strategy of social interaction, personality style that uses other people as tools for personal gain

## The Machiavellian Personality: A Closer Look

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- ▣ People who score high on Machiavellianism ("high Machs") select situations that are loosely structured, untethered by rules that restrict the deployment of exploitative strategy



## The Machiavellian Personality: A Closer Look

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- ▣ High Machs tend to evoke specific reactions from others, such as anger and retaliation for having been exploited
- ▣ High Machs influence or manipulate others in predictable ways, using tactics that are exploitative, self-serving, and deceptive

## Narcissism and Social Interaction:

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- ▣ Those high on narcissism are exhibitionistic, grandiose, self-centered, interpersonally exploitative

## Narcissism and Social Interaction

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- ▣ Selection: Associate with people who admire them, who will reflect positive view they hold of themselves
- ▣ Evocation: Exhibitionism splits people—some view them as brilliant and entertaining, others as selfish and boorish
- ▣ Manipulation: Highly exploitative of others

## Summary and Evaluation

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- ▣ Personality does not exist solely in the heads of individuals
- ▣ Personality affects the ways in which we interact with others in our social world

## Summary and Evaluation

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- ▣ We select people and environments, choosing social situations to which we will expose ourselves—personality plays a key role in the selection process
- ▣ We evoke emotions and actions in others, based in part on our personality characteristics

## Summary and Evaluation

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- ▣ Personality plays a key role in which we use tactics to influence or manipulate others