

## WRITE A SELF- DESCRIPTION

The self develops in a social context in which we can regulate our behaviors and anticipate the behaviors of others (Gecas, 2001) We create and recreate ourselves all of the time – we become a self through socialization, maturation, and desire (Elliot, 2001). As social beings “we are aware of our self-aspirations and of how our appearance and behavior is seen and judged by others” (Franzoi, 2006, p.58).

### Self perception

#### Cooley (1904) looking glass self

- 1) how we think we appear to others
- 2) how we think they evaluate that appearance
- 3) the resulting shame or pride we feel

George Mead - "Reflected Appraisals" - the individual learns to perceive the world as others do so as to anticipate other's reactions to him/her – the self emerges as the result of social interaction and role playing. We must learn to use symbols the meaning of which is determined by the social context ”spotlight” – if you change your hair color or style what percentage of people notice?

Developmental Stages:

1. preparation – imitation/ no meaning
2. gaming – playing games that require the interaction of many roles, e.g., playing house
3. generalized other – fully formed; children respond to themselves as society responds to them (more complex)

**Symbolic Interactionism** a theory of self presentation or impression management

**James – 2 distinct aspects of the self: the self as the knower (I) and the self as the known (ME)**

I - the self as an active, conscious agent (the executive function)

Me - the object of reflection (things become part of the me through our emotional identification with them) (self concept)

**Symbolic Interactionism** - deals with impression management and

## impression formation

**I** - the self as an active conscious agent (dynamic); ongoing process of consciousness, pure ego, the knower, the thinker

**Me** - the self as an object of reflection (by the I or by another); the Me is the sum total of what a person calls her own

### 3 categories of the Me:

constituents (material, spiritual, social)

emotions (self complacency, self-despair)

actions (self preservation, self enhancement)

#### 1. constituents

a) **the material self (one)** - body, home, possessions

b) **spiritual self (one)** - psychological faculties, disposition, character, attitudes, beliefs, etc.

c) **social selves (many)** - one for each person who carries an image of you in his mind; elements of yourself are disclosed differently to different people in different situations

#### 2. Actions

a) **self-preservation** - maintaining the status quo; behavior designed to protect integrity; **self-verification** – seeking information that confirms one's self-concept/

b) **self-enhancement (self seeking)** - behaviors designed to provide for the future, to enhance the self; typical impression management behaviors; the process of seeking out and interpreting situations to attain a positive view of oneself

#### 3.. Emotions (occur when the ME is evaluated by the I or by another)

a) **self complacency** - feeling good about yourself; pride, arrogance

b) **self-dissatisfaction or despair** - humility, guilt, shame

## Self Presentation or Impression Management

How we present ourselves to others is a form of communication. You are communicating a message about who you are - an image

We frequently think about our dress, our mannerisms, our style, our walk, etc. and how they might be perceived by others

Do you ever rehearse what you are going to say or how you are going to behave?

"Putting your best foot forward."

**Goffman - "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life"** - verbal and nonverbal acts that communicate one's view

Goffman - **Role theory** (the dramaturgical tradition);

**line** - point of view, everyone brings one

**face** - **positive social value** a participant claims in a situation or an interaction (if a person behaves appropriately, he is "**in face**"; if he behaves inappropriately, he is "**out of face**")

**face work** - mutual maintaining of face; to smooth over obstacles (giving excuses for other's social blunders)

There are rules for face-to-face encounters based on roles and role relationships (**social contract**).

**Role expectations** are specific requirements attached to specific roles.

**Role reciprocity** refers to the give and take between roles. **Role conflict** occurs when expectations between roles (interrole) or within a role (intrarole) are violated or potentially violated.

**Social Identity theory** looks at aspects of an individual's sense of self based on his/her group membership. According to this theory, behavior is determined by the situation (situated identities). One's **social identity** refers to the ways people are defined and regarded in social situations; how we define

ourselves within a particular group. **Social identities** are broken down into **Situated Identities** (identity specific to particular interactions with particular others) and **Composite Identities** ( a general concept of yourself that subsumes a variety of social interactions). **Ethnic Identity** – a type of social identity where a person identifies with a particular group based on race, religion, or ethnicity

We often become the roles we play - **Zimbarbo's Prison simulation** study; **Humphrey's (1985) business office simulation** - randomly determined who would be managers and who would be clerks; findings: both clerks and managers found the managers to be more intelligent, supportive, assertive, and leaderlike; **Langer and Benevuto (1978)** subservient role leads to **self-induced dependency (married women, the elderly)**

Role theory grew out of **GH Mead's Symbolic Interactionism** - this theory essentially says that there are as many selves as there are social roles that we play

**Why do we engage in impression management? (instrumental and expressive)**

**Social approval (positive reinforcement)(instrumental)**; impression management is a means to an end:

**Jellison and Gentry** - interview for employment: some Ss were told that the interviewer liked people who agreed with him while others were told that the interviewer liked people who disagreed with him. What do you suppose the interviewees did?

Researchers find that employees are sensitive to the point of view of their employers when expressing opinions

**Sex roles and social approval** - playing dumb; a social expectation for males and females -

Men 31% Women 23%

Findings: women are more likely to play dumb with spouses whereas men are more likely to play dumb with bosses, coworkers, strangers/ with children there is no difference; young people play dumb more often than older people; more highly educated people play dumb more

often than less educated people; Jewish people

in achievement situations there are different expectations based on **sex roles**;  
**theory - men and women conform to traditional sex-role stereotypes**  
**because attractive others approve of such conformity**

**Zanna & Pack (1975)** female Ss described themselves to either a highly attractive male with traditional values or with non-traditional values or to an unattractive male with either traditional or nontrad values;

In a second study, Zanna & Pack, the female Ss also had to complete an intelligence scale

Do men engage in the same type of impression management based on sex role expectations? What is an expectation that we have for males?

**Holmes (1971)** instructed one group of men to suck on a pacifier and another group to feel sandpaper or cloth. After this experience, all of the men were asked to endure electrical shocks. Which group was willing to endure greater amounts of shock? Why?

### **Expressive (we self-present in order to establish an identity)**

**Self concept** - a theory a person constructs about him/herself

Situated identity

Composite identity

### **Self-presentation Strategies**

**Behavioral matching** - acting like the person you are trying to impress

**Conforming to situational norms** - situated identities (funeral - wearing somber clothes, etc.)

**self-promotion** - increasing one's own power, bragging, to be perceived as competent or good/  
**exemplification** - strategy to elicit perception of integrity and moral worthiness or to arouse guilt (playing the martyr); **supplication** - advertising weaknesses (playing dumb)

**ingratiation** - influencing others' perception of our attractiveness by conforming, complimenting, being submissive, paying attention to them ("yes" men) (obese people, status relationships- ROTC cadets and officers)

**intimidation** - strategy used to arouse fear in others

## **Individual Differences in Impression Management**

**Self Monitoring** (Mark Snyder) - to what extent do individuals actively attempt to control the images and impressions that they present to others. St. Paul (1Cor 9:16-19) "**although I am not bound to anyone I made myself the slave of all so as to win over as many as possible. To the weak I became a weak person with a view to winning over the weak. I have made myself all things to all men...**"

Scale assesses concerns with appropriate self presentation; use of social comparison information in deciding how to behave; the ability to control and modify one's own self presentation; use of this particular skill in particular situations; one's expressive behavior is tailored to fit situational demands

What are the consequences of adopting such a strategic and pragmatic orientation in interpersonal relationships?

While most of us do this to some extent; there are individual differences in the stability of this behavior

**Self-Monitoring** - active attempt to control images and impressions given to others (Mark Snyder)

**High self-monitors** - concerned about the situational and interpersonal appropriateness of his/her behavior; sensitive to cues as to the social appropriateness of behavior; uses situational cues to control verbal and nonverbal self-presentation

**Low self-monitors** - expressive behavior controlled by internal affective state and stable attitudes

High scorers see themselves as adaptable and flexible; they are concerned about the situational and interpersonal appropriateness of behavior; they are sensitive to social cues and use these cues to control both verbal and nonverbal behaviors

Low scorers see themselves as principled and honest; their expressive behavior is controlled by internal states and stable attitudes rather than being self-consciously constructed to fit the social situation

Research findings: high self monitors are rated as such by friend; actors and politicians scores high; are able to intentionally express various emotions and portray themselves as possessing traits; the TO TELL THE TRUTH study

**Machiavellianism** (Christie & Geis) - high need for power; avoid emotional attachment; respond to elements in the situation that will produce the desirable results; control the means of influencing others (opportunistic; manipulating)