The Self in a Social World

Chapter 2

Individuality
Always remember that you are unique, just like everybody else.
Chapter Overview

- Self-Concept – Who am I?
- Spotlights and Illusions
- Self-esteem
- Self-serving Biases
- Self-Presentation
Self in a Social World

- **Self-Concept** – self knowledge and beliefs (who am I?)
  - **Self-Schemas** – beliefs about the self that guide our processing of self-relevant information
  - **Possible Self** - hopes and fears of what we may become
  - **Self-Reference Effect** – information relevant to our self-concept is processed and remembered more efficiently
Self - Spotlights and Illusions

- **Spotlight Effect** – tendency to overestimate others’ attention and memory for oneself
- **Illusion of Transparency** – false belief that others can easily read our concealed emotions
- **Cocktail Party Effect** – having a low detection threshold for our names
Development of the Social Self

- **The Social Self** – situational factors that influence self-concept
  - **Roles** – our behaviors can influence our sense of self
  - **Social Identity** – the group aspect of our self-concept
  - **Social Comparisons** – we evaluate ourselves by comparing our abilities and opinions to others
  - **Experience** – successes lead to confidence and empowerment
  - **Looking-Glass Self** – self-concept is influenced by how we *think* others see us
Self and Culture

- Independent vs. Interdependent Self
  - Individualism – identifying more with personal attributes over group identifications (Independent)
  - Collectivism – defining oneself according to one’s group memberships (Interdependent)
Culture and Cognition

- Culture can impact one’s thought processes
  - Which pen would you choose?
Culture and Cognition

- Collectivist self-esteem is more related to positive relationships
- Individualist self-esteem is related to detachment and superiority.
Self-Knowledge

- **Self-Knowledge** – subtle influences on our behaviors are often unnoticed
  - We are often better at predicting other's behaviors than our own
  - Planning Fallacy – underestimating how long a task will take
- Difficult to predict our future feelings
  - Impact Bias - overestimating the intensity and duration of our future feelings
  - Immune Neglect - underestimating our psychological immune system
Self-Knowledge

● **Self-Analysis** – the mental processes that control our behavior are separate from those that explain our behavior
  
  – **Dual Attitude System** – we have two sets of attitudes systems that influence behavior
  
  – **Implicit Attitudes** *(unconscious)* often differ from our **Explicit Attitudes** *(conscious)*
    
    ● **Implicit Egotism** – preference for things that are self-referencing
    
    ● **Dogs and Owners**
    
    ● **Relationships**
Self-esteem

- Self-esteem (S.E.) – your overall sense of self worth
  - I feel that I am a person of worth.
  - I feel that I have a number of good qualities
- Self-esteem Motivation – try to protect our self-esteem
- Darkside of Self-esteem - extreme low or high S.E. can have negative consequences
- Secure S.E. – self worth that is based on internal factors is related to positive life outcomes
Self-Serving Biases

- **Self-serving Bias** – cognitive errors that enable us to view ourselves positively
  - **Self-serving Attributions** – taking credit for positive outcomes but not for negative ones
  - **Better than Average Effect** – self-serving bias when engaging in social comparison
  - **Unrealistic Optimism (Illusion of Invulnerability)** – overly positive view about future events
Self-Serving Biases

- **False Consensus effect** – overestimating the extent to which others agree with our opinions and negative behaviors
  - On average, college students report they drink less than six drinks per week.
  - 54% of college students did not engage in binge drinking during past 2 weeks, 35% report “0” as their weekly average number of drinks.
  - Bias occurs because we generalize from our “in-group”
Self-Serving Biases

- False Uniqueness effect – underestimating the extent to which others share in our abilities/successful behaviors
Self-Serving Biases

- Who is going to heaven?
- O.J. Simpson 19%
- Bill Clinton 52%
- Princess Di 60%
- Mother Theresa 79%
- Themselves 87%
Explaining Self-Serving Biases

- **Negatives** – can lead to negative reactions, defensiveness, and disparagement
  - May also lead to narcissism, aggression, and poor judgment
- **Positives** - Self-serving biases protect from depression, anxiety and motivate us
- **Blind-spot Bias** – more likely to notice these biases in others rather than ourselves
Self-Control and Behavior

- **Self-efficacy** – feelings of competence and effectiveness at tasks
- **Locus of Control** – perceptions of internal or external control over one’s life
  - e.g. What happens to me is my own doing OR
  - I don’t have control over events in my life
- **Learned Helplessness** can result from external attributions of control

![Diagram showing the process from uncontrollable bad events to learned helplessness]
Self-Control and Behavior

- **Self Control** – regulating behavior depletes willpower
  - Is it better to have fewer or more choices in life?
- **Choice Paradox** – too many choices can deplete willpower, paralyze us, and leave us less satisfied
Self-Presentation Tactics

- Self-Presentation - presenting oneself in a favorable manner or one that corresponds to certain ideals
  - False Modesty – self-deprecation in order to elicit positive or reassuring comments
Self-Presentation Tactics

- **Self-Handicapping** – self-protection by creating excuses for a feared future failure
  
  - Attributing failures to external factors you create

![Cartoon of Carpe Diem](http://example.com/carpe-diem-cartoon)
Self-Presentation Tactics

- **Self-Monitoring** – amount of attention one gives to situations and self-presentation strategies
  - **High self-monitors** frequently adapt their behaviors and attitudes
  - **Low self-monitors** act similarly across various social situations