Chapter Outline and Learning Objectives

The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

LO 7.1 **Describe the types of attitudes and what they are based on.**

Where Do Attitudes Come From?

Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change

Emotion and Attitude Change

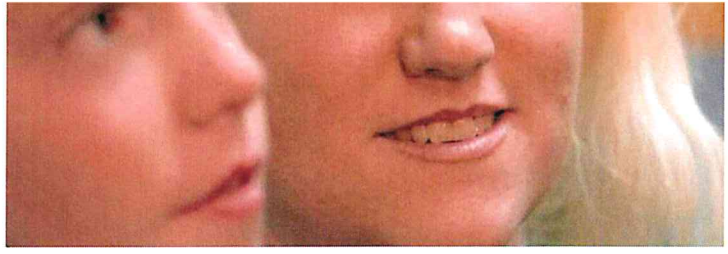
Attitude Change and the Body

It sometimes seems like advertising is everywhere we look. Ads that pop up on your computer or phone, on professional sports team jerseys, in public restrooms, on video screens at gasoline pumps, and even on motion sickness bags on airplanes (Story, 2007). But Jason Sadler, a 34-year-old based in Jacksonville, Florida, may just win the prize for advertising innovation. In 2009, he founded IWearYourShirt.com, through which he was paid by various companies to post attention-grabbing photos and videos of himself engaged in various shenanigans while wearing a t-shirt with their logo and name on it. A few years later, he auctioned off the rights to his last name, and for the price tag of $45,500 he legally became, for 12 months, Jason Headsets.com. Ridiculous? Perhaps. But the president of the Headsets.com has claimed that the investment yielded his company more than $6 million in media attention and name recognition (Horgan, 2013). And one year after that, a surf conditions travel app also made the decision to hire Jason—or, as he became known for a period of time, Mr. SurfrApp.

It is easy to laugh at the lengths to which advertisers will go, brushing them off as absurd but harmless attempts to influence our attitudes and behaviors. We should keep in mind, though, that advertising can have powerful effects. Consider the history of cigarette ads. In the 19th century, most consumer goods, including tobacco products, were made and sold locally. But as the Industrial Revolution led to the mass production of many consumer products, manufacturers sought broader markets. Advertising was the natural result. In the 1880s, cigarettes were being mass-produced for the first time, and moguls such as James Buchanan Duke began to market their brands aggressively. Duke placed ads in newspapers, rented space on thousands of billboards, hired famous actresses to endorse his brands, and gave gifts to retailers who stocked his products. Other cigarette manufacturers soon followed suit (Kluger, 1996).

These efforts were phenomenally successful, as sales of cigarettes skyrocketed in the United States. But there remained a vast untapped market—namely, women. Until the early 20th century, men bought 99% of all cigarettes sold. It was socially unacceptable for women to smoke; those who did were considered to have

the United States, tobacco companies now have begun aggressively marketing cigarettes in other countries. The World Health Organization estimates that 50,000 teenagers a day begin smoking in Asia alone, and that smoking may eventually kill *one-quarter* of the young people currently living in Asia (Teves, 2002).



It seems that no corner is left untouched in the modern advertising world. Companies go to great lengths to grab attention and influence, even if incrementally, people's familiarity with and attitudes toward their products. This Utah woman, for example, accepted a fee of $10,000 to advertise Golden Palace casino on her forehead.

Is advertising responsible for this looming public health crisis? To what extent can advertising really shape people's attitudes and behavior? Exactly what are attitudes, anyway, and through what processes can they be changed? These questions, which are some of the oldest in social psychology, are the subject of this chapter.

The Nature and Origin of Attitudes

LO 7.1 **Describe the types of attitudes and what they are based on.**

Each of us *evaluates* the world around us. We form likes and dislikes of virtually everything we encounter; indeed, it would be odd to hear someone say, "I feel completely neutral toward anchovies, chocolate, Kanye West, and Donald Trump." For most people, at least *one* of those targets should elicit strong attitudes, don't you think? Simply put, **attitudes** are evaluations of people, objects, or ideas (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010; Bohner & Dickel, 2011; Eagly & Chaiken, 2007; Petty & Krosnick, 2014). Attitudes are important because they often determine what we do—whether we eat or avoid anchovies and chocolate, download Kanye songs or change the station when they come on, and who we vote for on Election Day.

Attitudes
Evaluations of people, objects, and ideas

Where Do Attitudes Come From?

One provocative answer to the question of where attitudes come from is that they are linked, in part, to our genes (Cai et al., 2016; Lewis, Kandler, & Riemann, 2014;

of these components or some combination of them (Aquino et al., 2016; Zanna & Rempel, 1988).

COGNITIVELY BASED ATTITUDES Sometimes our attitudes are based primarily on the relevant facts, such as the objective merits of a car. How many miles per gallon does it get? What are its safety features? To the extent that an evaluation is based primarily on beliefs about the properties of an attitude object, we say it is a **cognitively based attitude**. An attitude of this kind allows us to classify the pluses and minuses of an object so that we can quickly determine whether we want to have anything to do with it (De Houwer, Gawronski, & Barnes-Holmes, 2013; DeMarree et al., 2017). Consider your attitude toward a basic object like a vacuum cleaner. Your attitude is likely to be based on your beliefs about the objective merits of various brands, such as how well they clean up dirt and how much they cost—not on more emotional considerations such as how sexy they make you feel.

Cognitively Based Attitude
An attitude based primarily on people's beliefs about the properties of an attitude object

AFFECTIVELY BASED ATTITUDES An attitude rooted more in emotions and values than on an objective appraisal of pluses and minuses is called an **affectively based attitude** (Breckler & Wiggins, 1989; Bülbül & Menon, 2010). Sometimes we simply like a car, regardless of how many miles per gallon it gets. Occasionally we even feel strongly attracted to something—such as another person—in spite of having negative beliefs about him or her (e.g., knowing the person is a "bad influence").

Affectively Based Attitude
An attitude based more on people's feelings and values than on their beliefs about the nature of an attitude object

As a guide to which attitudes are likely to be affectively based, consider the topics that etiquette manuals will tell you should not be discussed at a dinner party: politics, sex, and religion. People seem to vote more with their hearts than their minds, for example, caring more about how they feel about a candidate than their beliefs about his or her specific policies (Abelson et al., 1982; Westen, 2007). In fact, even those segments of the electorate who know virtually nothing about specific politicians nonetheless often have strong feelings about them (Ahler et al., 2017; Redlawsk, 2002). Consider, for example, polls taken in the wake of the 2016 U.S. election in which more than one-third of voters did not realize that "Obamacare" was the same thing as the Affordable Care Act (Dropp & Nyhan,

faintly of laundry detergent and chicken soup. Eventually, either of those smells alone will trigger the emotions you experienced during your visits, through the process of classical conditioning (De Houwer, 2011; Walther & Langer, 2010).

Some attitudes are based more on emotions and values than on facts and figures. Attitudes toward gay marriage may be such a case.

In **operant conditioning**, behaviors we freely choose to perform become more or less frequent, depending on whether they are followed by a reward (positive reinforcement) or punishment. How does this apply to attitudes? Imagine that a 4-year-old White girl goes to the playground with her father and begins to play with an African-American girl. Her father expresses disapproval, telling her, "We don't play with that kind of child." It won't take long before the child associates interacting with African Americans with disapproval, and therefore adopts her father's racist attitudes. Attitudes can take on a positive or negative affect through either classical or operant conditioning, as shown in Figure 7.1 (Cacioppo et al., 1992; Sweldens, Corneille, & Yzerbyt, 2014).

Although affectively based attitudes come from many sources, we can group them into one family because they (1) do not result from a rational examination of the issues, (2) are not governed by logic, and (3) are often linked to people's values, so that efforts to change them challenge those values (Katz, 1960; Kertzer et al., 2014). How can we tell if an attitude is more affectively or cognitively based? See the following Try It! for one way to measure the bases of people's attitudes.

Classical Conditioning

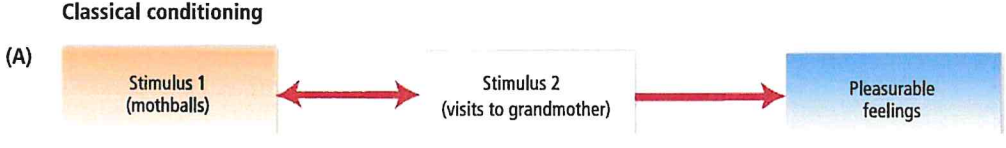
The phenomenon whereby a stimulus that elicits an emotional response is repeatedly paired with a neutral stimulus that does not, until the neutral stimulus takes on the emotional properties of the first stimulus

Operant Conditioning

The phenomenon whereby behaviors we freely choose to perform become more or less frequent, depending on whether they are followed by a reward or punishment

Figure 7.1 Classical and Operant Conditioning of Attitudes

Affectively based attitudes can result from either classical or operant conditioning.



annoyed	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	happy
tense	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	calm
bored	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	excited
angry	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	relaxed
disgusted	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	acceptance
sorrowful	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	joy

2. Circle the number on each scale that best describes the traits or characteristics of snakes.

useless	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	useful
foolish	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	wise
unsafe	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	safe
harmful	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	beneficial
worthless	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	valuable
imperfect	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	perfect
unhealthy	–3	–2	–1	0	1	2	3	wholesome

Add up the sum of your responses to Question 1 and, separately, your responses to Question 2.

Question 1 measures the affective component of your attitude toward snakes, whereas Question 2 measures the cognitive component of attitudes. Most people's attitudes toward snakes are more affectively than cognitively based. If this is true of you, your total score for Question 1 should depart more from zero (in a negative direction for most people) than your total score for Question 2.

Now go back and fill out the scales again, substituting *vacuum cleaners* for *snakes*. Most people's attitudes toward a utilitarian object such as a vacuum cleaner are more cognitively than affectively based. If this is true of you, your total score for Question 2 should depart more from zero than your total score for Question 1.

Behaviorally Based Attitude
An attitude based on observations of how one behaves toward an object

BEHAVIORALLY BASED ATTITUDES A **behaviorally based attitude** stems from people's observations of their own behavior toward an object. This may seem a little odd: How do we know how to behave if we don't already know how we feel? According to Daryl Bem's (1972) *self-perception theory,* under certain circumstances people don't know how they feel until they see how they behave. For example,

Consider Robert, a white college student who genuinely believes that all races are equal and abhors the very idea of any kind of racial bias. This is Robert's explicit attitude, in the sense that it is his conscious evaluation of members of other races that governs how he chooses to act. For example, consistent with his explicit attitude, Robert recently signed a petition in favor of hiring a more diverse faculty at his university. Robert has grown up in a culture in which there are many negative stereotypes about minority groups, however, and it is possible that some of these negative ideas have seeped into him outside of his awareness (Devine, 1989; Xu, Nosek, & Greenwald, 2014). When he is around African Americans, for example, perhaps some negative feelings are triggered automatically. If so, he has a negative implicit attitude toward African Americans, which is likely to influence those behaviors he is not monitoring or attending to, such as whether he makes good eye contact or how nervous he appears to be (Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Greenwald et al., 2009).

People can have explicit and implicit attitudes toward virtually anything, not just other racial groups. For example, students can believe explicitly that they hate math yet still have a positive attitude at an implicit level, finding that—in spite of what they claim—they actually enjoy working through a certain type of problem (Galdi, Arcuri, & Gawronski, 2008; Ranganath & Nosek, 2008; Steele & Ambady, 2006). How do we know this? A variety of techniques have been developed to measure implicit attitudes, one of the most popular of which is the Implicit Association Test, or IAT, which we discuss in Chapter 13. But for now, let's focus on the question of where our implicit attitudes come from.

Laurie Rudman, Julie Phelan, and Jessica Heppen (2007) have found evidence that implicit attitudes are rooted more in people's childhood experiences, whereas explicit attitudes are rooted more in their recent experiences. In one study, the researchers measured college students' implicit and explicit attitudes toward overweight people. They also asked the students to report their current weight and their weight when they were growing up. Participants' implicit attitudes toward overweight people were predicted by their childhood weight but not their current weight, whereas their explicit attitudes were predicted by their current weight but not their childhood weight. An additional finding

People can have both explicit and implicit attitudes toward the same topic. Social psychologists have been especially interested in people's explicit and implicit attitudes toward members of other races. For example, many people who evaluate job applicants would likely state that they have no biases whatsoever against people of different racial groups. But research suggests that résumés with "White-sounding" names like Emily and Greg tend to get more callbacks for interviews than résumés with "Black-sounding" names like Lakisha and Jamal (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). Do you think this could be the result of implicit bias?

Explicit Attitudes

Attitudes that we consciously endorse and can easily report

Implicit Attitudes

Attitudes that exist outside of conscious awareness

Watch IMPLICIT ATTITUDES

1. Which of the following conclusions is the most consistent with research on the heritability of attitudes?
   a. Our attitudes are shaped by our surroundings and do not seem to have any genetic component to them.
   b. Our attitudes are inherited and dictated by our genetic makeup, with little influence from environmental factors.
   c. We often inherit a temperament or personality that renders us likely to develop similar attitudes to those held by our genetic relatives.
   d. Fraternal twins are just as likely to share attitudes as are identical twins.
2. People's emotional reaction to a target is referred to as the _____component of attitudes.
   a. affective
   b. behavioral
   c. cognitive
   d. operant
3. Which component of an attitude is most related to the process of examining facts and weighing the objective merits of a target?
   a. Affective
   b. Behavioral
   c. Cognitive
   d. Operant
4. Adults' tendency to experience happy, nostalgia-filled feelings when they hear the music of an ice cream truck can be best explained by the relationship of attitudes to
   a. classical conditioning.
   b. operant conditioning.
   c. self-perception.
   d. values.
5. Newman is currently overweight, but as a child he was quite thin. His current explicit attitude toward the overweight is likely to be more _____, and his current implicit attitude toward the overweight is likely to be more _____.
   a. behaviorally based; cognitively based
   b. cognitively based; behaviorally based
   c. negative; positive
   d. positive; negative

When Do Attitudes Predict Behavior?

LO 7.2 Analyze the conditions under which attitudes can predict behavior.

Remember our discussion of cigarette advertising? The reason corporations and other groups are willing to spend so much money on ad campaigns is because of a simple assumption: When people change their attitudes (e.g., cigarettes are for women too), they change their behavior as well (e.g., women start smoking). In reality, though, the relationship between attitudes and behavior is not so simple, as shown in a classic (and disturbing) study. In the early 1930s, Richard LaPiere embarked on a cross-country sightseeing trip with a young Chinese couple. Prejudice against Asians was common

How can this be? Does a person's attitude toward an ethnic group or political candidate or cigarettes really tell us nothing about how he or she will behave? How can we reconcile LaPiere's findings—and other studies like it—with the fact that many times behavior and attitudes *are* consistent? Indeed, attitudes do predict behavior, but only under certain specifiable conditions (DeBono & Snyder, 1995; Friese et al., 2016; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). One key factor is knowing whether the behavior we are trying to predict is spontaneous or planned (Fazio, 1990).

Predicting Spontaneous Behaviors

Sometimes we act spontaneously, thinking little about what we are about to do. When LaPiere and his Chinese friends entered a restaurant, the manager did not have a lot of time to reflect on whether to serve them; he or she had to make a snap decision. Similarly, when someone stops us on the street and asks us to sign a petition, we usually don't stop and think about it for 5 minutes; we decide on the spot whether to sign on.

Attitudes will predict spontaneous behaviors only when they are highly accessible to people (Fazio, 2007; Petty & Krosnick, 2014). **Attitude accessibility** refers to the strength of the association between an object and an evaluation of it, which is typically measured by the speed with which people can report how they feel about the object or issue (Fazio, Ledbetter, & Towles-Schwen, 2000; Young & Fazio, 2013). When accessibility is high, your attitude comes to mind whenever you see or think about the attitude object. When accessibility is low, your attitude comes to mind more slowly. It follows that highly accessible attitudes will be more likely to predict spontaneous behaviors because people are more likely to be thinking about their attitude when they are called on to act. But what makes attitudes accessible in the first place? One important determinant is the degree of experience people have behaving with the attitude object. Some attitudes are based on hands-on experience, such as a person's attitude toward the homeless after volunteering at a homeless shelter. Other attitudes are formed without much experience, such as a person's attitude toward the homeless that is based on reading newspaper articles. The more direct experience people have with an attitude object, the more accessible their attitude will be, and the more

Attitude Accessibility
The strength of the association between an attitude object and a person's evaluation of that object, measured by the speed with which people can report how they feel about the object

Although some behaviors result from spur-of-the-moment, spontaneous decisions, others emerge from more thoughtful processes in which we carefully weigh pros and cons. The theory of planned behavior helps us understand the link between attitudes and these sorts of deliberative behaviors.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The idea that people's intentions are the best predictors of their deliberate behaviors, which are determined by their attitudes toward specific behaviors, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control

control (see Figure 7.2). Let's consider each of these in turn.

SPECIFIC ATTITUDES The theory of planned behavior holds that the more specific the attitude toward the behavior in question, the better that attitude can be expected to predict the behavior. In one study, researchers asked a sample of married women for their attitudes toward birth control pills, ranging from their general attitude toward birth control to their specific attitude toward using birth control pills during the next 2 years (see Table 7.1). Two years later, they asked the women whether they had used birth control pills at any time since the last interview. As Table 7.1 shows, the general attitudes expressed 2 years earlier did not predict the women's subsequent use of birth control at all. This general attitude had not taken into account other factors that could influence such a decision, from concern about the long-term effects of the pill to their attitudes regarding other available forms of birth control. The more specific the original question was about the act of using birth control pills, the better the attitude predicted actual behavior (Davidson & Jaccard, 1979).

This study and others like it help explain why LaPiere (1934) found such inconsistency between people's attitudes and behaviors. His question to the proprietors—whether they would serve "members of the Chinese race"—was very general. Had he asked a much more specific question—such as whether they would serve an educated, well-dressed, well-to-do Chinese couple accompanied by a White American college professor—the proprietors might have given an answer that was more predictive of their actual behavior.

Figure 7.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior

According to this theory, the best predictors of people's planned, deliberative behaviors are their behavioral intentions. The best predictors of their intentions are their attitudes toward the specific behavior, their subjective norms, and their perceived behavioral control of the behavior.

(Adapted from Ajzen, 1985)

Note: If a correlation is close to 0, it means that there is little to no relationship between the two variables. The closer the correlation is to 1, the stronger the positive relationship between attitudes and behavior.

(Adapted from Davidson & Jaccard, 1979)

SUBJECTIVE NORMS In addition to measuring attitudes toward the behavior, we also need to measure subjective norms—people's beliefs about how others they care about will view the behavior in question (see Figure 7.2). Knowing these beliefs can be just as important as knowing the person's attitudes when it comes to trying to predict someone's intentions (Hood & Shook, 2014; Park & Smith, 2007). For example, suppose we want to predict whether Deepa intends to go to a violin concert and we know that she doesn't like classical music. We would probably say that she won't go. But suppose we also know that Deepa's best friend, Kristen, is playing in the concert, and that Deepa assumes that Kristen will be disappointed if she is not in the audience and will view her failure to show up as a slap in the face. Knowing this subjective norm—Deepa's belief about how a close friend will view her behavior—we might predict that she will go.

PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL Finally, as seen in Figure 7.2, people's intentions are influenced by the ease with which they believe they can perform the behavior—perceived behavioral control. If people think it is difficult to perform a behavior, such as remembering to use a condom when having sex, they will not form a strong intention to do so. If people think it is easy to perform the behavior, such as remembering to buy milk on the way home from work, they are more likely to form a strong intention to do so.

Considerable research supports the idea that asking people about these determinants of their intentions—attitude specificity, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—increases our ability to anticipate how they will act. Specifically, these factors help us predict those behaviors that are planned and deliberative, such as deciding what job to accept, whether to wear a seat belt, whom to vote for, and, yes, whether to use a condom when having sex (Albarracín et al., 2001; Hood & Shook, 2014; Rise, Sheeran, & Hukkelberg, 2010; Manning, 2009).

#trending

they themselves engaged in a variety of environmentally friendly behaviors, including turning down the thermostat when leaving home, bringing reusable bags to the grocery store, and for reusable containers, asking someone whether they consider themselves an environmentalist may be less useful than asking how they feel about the *average* environmentalist.

Review Questions

1. The major finding of LaPiere's (1934) classic study on attitudes and behavior involving prejudice and hotel/restaurant owners is that
   - **a.** people are more prejudiced than their self-reported attitudes would lead us to believe.
   - **b.** people's attitudes are not always reliable predictors of their behaviors.
   - **c.** the less accessible an attitude is, the more likely it is to shape behavior.
   - **d.** when it comes to racial prejudice, people's attitudes are particularly strong predictors of their behaviors.
2. Attitude accessibility is a particularly good predictor of behavior when
   - **a.** the behavior in question is spontaneous.
   - **b.** the behavior in question is deliberative.
   - **c.** the attitude in question is general.
   - **d.** the attitude in question is an unpopular one.
3. Which of the following is the best example of a deliberative behavior?
   - **a.** Buying a candy bar from the rack next to the check-out line at the grocery store
   - **b.** Telling a salesman who calls you on the phone that you aren't interested in the item he's selling
   - **c.** Deciding at the last minute to skip a class because your friends just told you that they're going to a movie you want
   - **d.** Making a decision regarding where you want to travel over your next vacation break
4. Wendy is a member of a political group on your campus and is interested in finding out how many students plan to vote in the next presidential election. According to the theory of planned behavior, which of the following attitude questions Wendy could ask would be the best predictor of whether or not a particular student will vote in the next presidential election?
   - **a.** "What are your attitudes about U.S. politics?"
   - **b.** "What are your attitudes about voting?"
   - **c.** "What are your attitudes about voting in the next U.S. presidential election?"
   - **d.** "What are your attitudes about former U.S. President Barack Obama?"
5. In trying to predict deliberative behaviors, what three considerations must we evaluate?
   - **a.** Cognitively based attitudes, behaviorally based attitudes, affectively based attitudes
   - **b.** Attitude specificity, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control
   - **c.** Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, self-perception theory
   - **d.** Attitude accessibility, explicit attitudes, implicit attitudes

consumer products can be influenced by publicity. Remember Jason Sadler—er, Jason Headsets.com? His namesake client company claimed to have made millions of dollars on the publicity. But such external influences—like an opportunistic attention-seeker's name change—are not the only forces that shape our attitudes. Let's take a look at the conditions under which attitudes are most likely to change.

Changing Attitudes by Changing Behavior: Cognitive Dissonance Theory Revisited

We have already discussed one way that attitudes change: when people behave inconsistently with their attitudes and cannot find external justification for their behavior. We refer, of course, to cognitive dissonance theory. As we noted in Chapter 6, people experience dissonance when they do something that threatens their image of themselves as decent, kind, and honest—particularly if there is no way they can explain away this behavior as due to external circumstances.

If you wanted to change your friends' attitudes toward a problematic behavior like smoking, using tanning beds, or texting while driving, one way to succeed might be to get *them* to give speeches against each practice. You would want to make it hard for your friends to find external reasons for giving the speech; for example, you would not want them to justify their actions by saying, "I'm doing it as a special favor for my friend" or "I'm getting paid to do it." That is, as we saw in Chapter 6, the goal is to get your friends to find *internal justification* for giving the speech, whereby they must seek to reduce the dissonance of giving the speech by deciding that they actually believe what they are saying. But what if your goal is to change attitudes on a mass scale? Suppose you were hired by the American Cancer Society to come up with an antismoking campaign that could be used nationwide to counteract the kind of tobacco advertisements we discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Although dissonance techniques are powerful, they are difficult to carry out on a mass scale (e.g., it would be hard to have all American smokers make antismoking speeches under just the right conditions of internal justification). To change as many people's attitudes as possible, you would have to resort to other techniques of attitude change. You would probably construct some sort of **persuasive communication**, such as a speech

Persuasive Communication
A message advocating a particular side of an issue

Sometimes attitudes change dramatically over short periods of time. If previous presidential administrations are any indication, Americans' approval rating of Donald Trump will go up and down during

change their attitudes in response to persuasive messages, focusing on the source of the communication, the nature of the communication, and the nature of the audience

audience (e.g., whether the audience is hostile or friendly to the point of view in question). Because these researchers were at Yale University, their approach to the study of persuasive communications remains known as the **Yale Attitude Change approach**.

This approach yielded a great deal of useful information on how people change their attitudes in response to persuasive communications, as summarized in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 The Yale Attitude Change Approach

Researchers at Yale University initiated research on what makes a persuasive communication effective, focusing on "who said what to whom."

The Yale Attitude Change Approach

The effectiveness of persuasive communications depends on who says what to whom.

Who: The Source of the Communication

- Credible speakers (e.g., those with obvious expertise) persuade people more than speakers lacking in credibility (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Schwarz, Newman, & Leach, 2016).
- Attractive speakers (whether due to physical or personality attributes) persuade people more than unattractive speakers do (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975; Khan & Sutcliffe, 2014).
- People sometimes remember a message longer than they do information about the message source. In this manner, information from a low-credibility source sometimes becomes more persuasive with the passage of time, a phenomenon referred to as the *sleeper effect* (Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004; Albarracín, Kumkale, & Poyner-Del Vento, 2017).

What: The Nature of the Communication

- People are more persuaded by messages that do not seem to be designed to influence them (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Walster & Festinger, 1962).
- It is generally better to present a two-sided communication (one that presents arguments for and against your position) than a one-sided communication (one that presents only arguments favoring your position), especially when you are sure to refute the arguments on the other side of the issue (Cornelis, Cauberghe, & De Pelesmacker, 2014; Igou & Bless, 2003).
- In terms of order effects, if speeches are to be given back to back and there will be a delay before people have to make up their minds, there tends to be a *primacy effect*: the first speech is usually more persuasive. However, if there is a delay between the speeches and people will make up their minds right after the second one, there is likely to be a *recency effect*: it is then

To Whom: The Nature of the Audience

- An audience that is distracted during the persuasive communication will often be persuaded more than one that is not distracted (Albarracín & Wyer, 2001; Festinger & Maccoby, 1964).
- Some individual differences predict a greater likelihood of persuadability, including having lower intelligence, being of moderate (versus high or low) self-esteem, and being between the impressionable ages of 18-25 (Krosnick & Alwin, 1989; Rhodes & Wood, 1992; Sears, 1981).
- Cultural differences have also been found for which argument types are most persuasive. For American or other "Western" audiences, personal preferences are often central to effective messages, such as an advertisement that emphasizes, "I like it because it makes me feel good." In other cultures that prioritize contextually appropriate behavior, an advertisement might be more effective by emphasizing the

worry more about the content of the message?

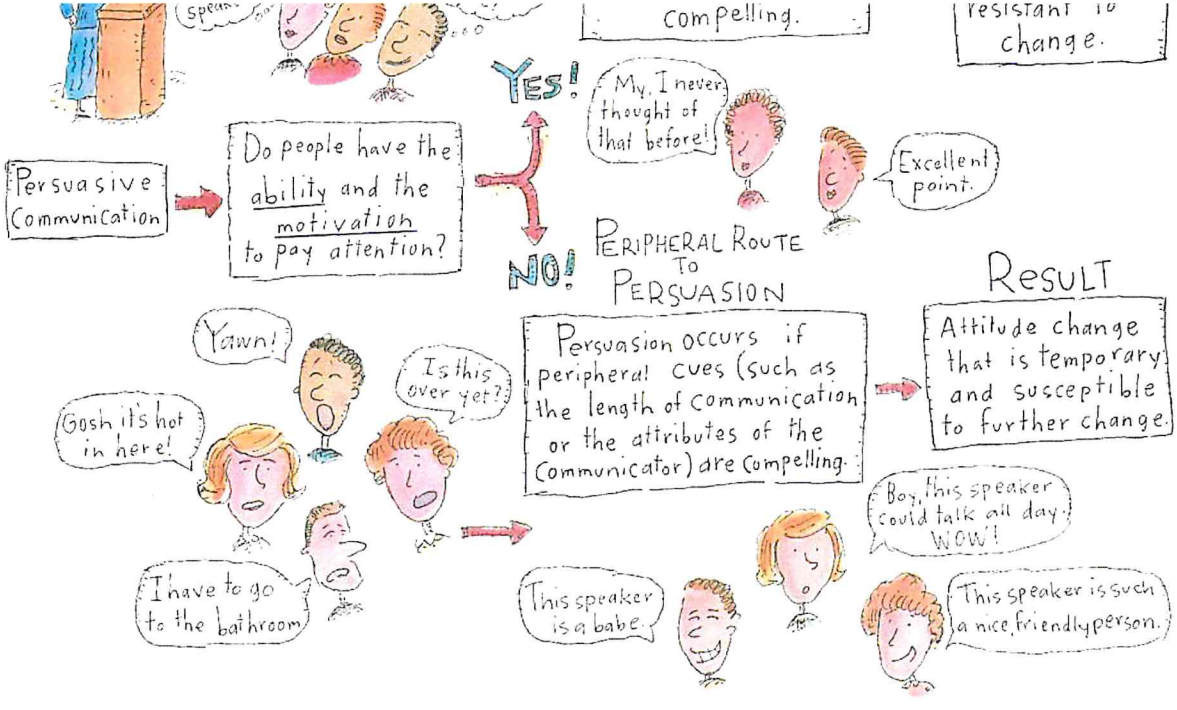
THE CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL ROUTES TO PERSUASION More recent attitude researchers have asked the same questions: When is it best to stress factors central to the communication, such as the strength of the arguments? When is it best to stress factors peripheral to the logic of the arguments, such as the credibility or attractiveness of the person delivering the speech (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Wegener, 2014)? The **elaboration likelihood model** of persuasion (Petty, Barden, & Wheeler, 2009; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), for example, specifies when people will be influenced by what the speech says (i.e., the logic of the arguments) and when they will be influenced by more superficial characteristics (e.g., who gives the speech or how long it is).

The theory states that under certain conditions people are motivated to pay attention to the facts in a communication, which means that the more logically compelling those facts are, the more persuasion occurs. That is, sometimes people elaborate on the messages they hear, carefully thinking about and processing the content of the communication. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) call this the **central route to persuasion**. Under other conditions, people are not motivated to pay attention to the facts; instead, they notice only the surface characteristics of the message, such as how long it is and who is delivering it. Here, people will not be swayed by the logic of the arguments, because they are not paying close attention to what the communicator says. Instead, they are persuaded if the surface characteristics of the message—such as the fact that it is long or is delivered by an expert or attractive communicator—make it seem like a reasonable one. Petty and Cacioppo call this the **peripheral route to persuasion** because people are swayed by things peripheral to the message itself. For example, if you happen to follow Khloe Kardashian on Twitter, you may have seen any of a variety of tweets related to particular products, such as one stating that a particular brand of jeans "makes your butt look scary good." Such a communication is, shall we say, light on factual evidence; if it persuaded anyone to go out and buy

Central Route to Persuasion
The case in which people have both the ability and the motivation to elaborate on a persuasive communication, listening carefully to and thinking about the arguments presented

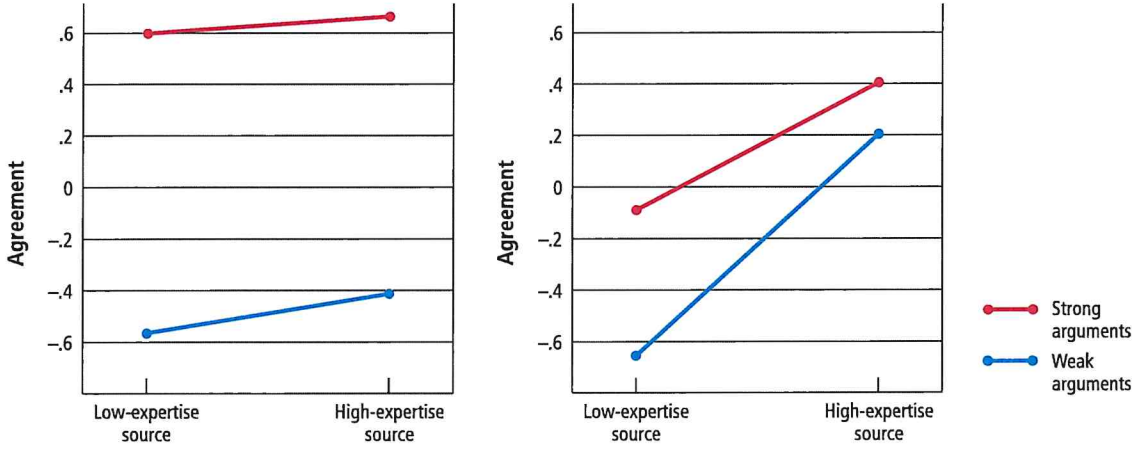
Peripheral Route to Persuasion
The case in which people do not elaborate on the arguments in a persuasive communication but are instead swayed by more superficial cues

Sometimes attitude change occurs via a peripheral route. For example, we can be swayed more by who delivers a persuasive message than by the strength of the message itself, such as when consumers buy certain products because a celebrity tweets about them.



THE MOTIVATION TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE ARGUMENTS One thing that determines whether people are motivated to pay attention to a communication is the personal relevance of the topic: How important is the topic to a person's well-being? For example, consider the issue of whether Social Security benefits should be reduced. How personally relevant is this to you? If you are a 72-year-old whose sole income is from Social Security, the issue is extremely relevant; if you are a 20-year-old from a well-to-do family, it is likely less so.

The more personally relevant an issue is, the more willing people are to pay at-



the exam is a challenge most students would welcome"). The second variable was a peripheral cue—the prestige of the speaker. Half of the participants were told that the author of the speech was an eminent professor at Princeton University, whereas the others were told that the author was a high school student. When deciding how much to agree with the speaker's position, the participants could use one or both of these different kinds of information; they could listen carefully to the arguments and think about how convincing they were, or they could simply go by who said them and how prestigious that source was. As predicted by the elaboration likelihood model, the route to persuasion depended on the personal relevance of the issue. The left panel of Figure 7.5 shows what happened when the issue was highly relevant to the listeners. Those students who heard strong arguments agreed much more with the speech than did those who heard weak arguments, regardless of who presented them, the Princeton professor or the high school student. A good argument was a good argument, even if it was written by someone who lacked prestige. In other words, persuasion took place via the central route.

What happens when a topic is of low relevance? As seen in the right panel of Figure 7.5, what mattered then in the comprehensive exam study was not the strength

was relatively simple and easy to understand, participants paid little attention to the expert's apparent credentials, instead focusing on the strength of the arguments he offered. Able to understand the persuasive arguments, they engaged in a central route. But when his scientific testimony was complicated and conveyed in jargon that only a molecular biologist could fully grasp, mock jurors relied on the expert's credentials to determine how much stock to place in his testimony. Unable to attend carefully to the persuasive communication, they were influenced by peripheral cues (Cooper, Bennett, & Sukel, 1996).

In short, your own expertise and personal tendencies shape your ability to pay attention to persuasive arguments. As one more example, those of us who are "morning people" are more likely to take the central route to persuasion the earlier in the day it is. But those of us who are "evening people" are more likely to take the central route as the hours grow later (Martin & Martin, 2013).

HOW TO ACHIEVE LONG-LASTING ATTITUDE CHANGE Now that you know a persuasive communication can change people's attitudes in either of two ways—via the central or the peripheral route—you may be wondering what difference it makes. Does it really matter whether it was the logic of the arguments or the expertise of the source that changed students' minds about comprehensive exams in the Petty and colleagues (1981) study? Given the bottom line—they changed their attitudes—should any of us care how they got to that point?

If we are interested in creating long-lasting attitude change, we should care a lot. People who base their attitudes on a careful analysis of the arguments will be more likely to maintain this attitude over time, more likely to behave consistently with this attitude, and more resistant to counterpersuasion than people who base their attitudes on peripheral cues (Mackie, 1987; Petty & Briñol, 2012; Petty & Wegener, 1999). In one study, for example, people changed their attitudes either by analyzing the logic of the arguments or by using peripheral cues. When the participants were telephoned 10 days later, those who had analyzed the logic of the arguments were more likely to have maintained their new attitude (Chaiken, 1980).

And throughout this chapter we have considered the potential for public health messages to change attitudes and behaviors—but just how long lasting are such changes made in response to advertisements, movies, books, and other efforts? In

a **fear-arousing communication**. Public service ads often take this approach by trying to scare people into practicing safer sex, wearing seat belts, cutting down on carbon emissions, and staying away from drugs. For example, since January 2001, cigarettes sold in Canada have been required to display graphic pictures of diseased gums and other body parts that cover at least 50% of the outside label. A few years ago the U.S. Food and Drug Administration ruled that all cigarette packs sold in the United States were to contain similar images, but after legal challenges from the tobacco industry, the USFDA abandoned the plan (Felberbaum, 2013).

Fear-Arousing Communication
Persuasive message that attempts to change people's attitudes by arousing their fears

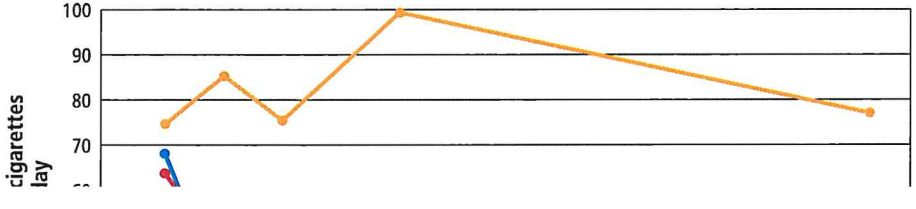
Do fear-arousing communications work? It depends on whether the fear influences people's ability attend to and process the arguments in a message. If a moderate amount of fear is created and people believe that listening to the message will teach them how to reduce this fear, then they are more likely to be motivated to analyze the message carefully and their attitudes via the central route (Emery et al., 2014; Petty, 1995).

Consider a study in which a group of smokers watched a graphic film depicting lung cancer and then read pamphlets with specific instructions about how to quit smoking (Leventhal, Watts, & Pagano, 1967). As shown by the bottom line in Figure 7.6, people in this condition reduced their smoking significantly more than people who were shown only the film or only the pamphlet. Why? Watching the film scared people, and giving them the pamphlet reassured them that there was a way to reduce

Figure 7.6 Effects of Fear Appeals on Attitude Change

People were shown a scary film about the effects of smoking, instructions about how to stop smoking, or both. Those who were shown both had the biggest reduction in the number of cigarettes they smoked.

(Adapted from Leventhal, Watts, & Pagano, 1967)



The FDA has tried to implement guidelines to require all cigarette packs sold in the United States to display pictures that warn about the dangers of smoking, such as the one shown here. Do you think that this ad would scare people into quitting?

defensive, deny the importance of the threat, and be unable to think rationally about the issue (Feinberg & Willer, 2011; Janis & Feshbach, 1953; Kessels et al., 2014). So if you have decided to arouse people's fear in your ad for the American Cancer Society, keep these points in mind: Try to create enough fear to motivate people to pay attention to your arguments, but not so much fear that people will tune out what you say. And make sure to include some specific recommendations about how to stop smoking so people will be reassured that paying close attention to your arguments will help them reduce their fear.

EMOTIONS AS A HEURISTIC Another way in which emotions can cause attitude change is by acting as a signal for how we feel about something. According to the **heuristic–systematic model of persuasion** (Chaiken & Stangor 1987), when people take the peripheral route to persuasion, they often use heuristics. Recall from Chapter 3 that heuristics are mental shortcuts people use to make judgments quickly and efficiently. In the present context, a heuristic is a simple rule people use to decide what their attitude is without having to spend a lot of time analyzing every detail about the topic. Examples of such heuristics are "Experts are always right" and "People who speak quickly must know what they're talking about."

Heuristic–Systematic Model of Persuasion

An explanation of the two ways in which persuasive communications can cause attitude change: either systematically processing the merits of the arguments or using mental shortcuts or heuristics

Interestingly, our emotions can themselves act as heuristics to determine our attitudes. When trying to decide what our attitude is about something, we often rely on the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic (Forgas, 2013; Kim, Park, & Schwarz, 2010; Storbeck & Clore, 2008). If we feel good, we must have a positive attitude; if we feel bad, it's thumbs down. Now this probably sounds like a pretty good rule to follow, and, like most heuristics, it is—most of the time. Suppose you need a new couch and go to a furniture store to look around. You see one in your price range and are trying to decide whether to buy it. Using the "How do I feel about it?" heuristic, you do a quick check of your emotions. If you feel great while you're sitting on the couch in the store, you will probably buy it.

The only problem is that sometimes it is difficult to tell where our feelings come

to sway us when we're sad (Schwarz, Bless, & Bohner, 1991).

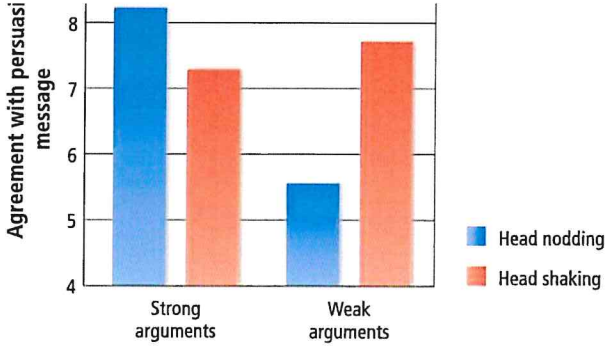
EMOTION AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF ATTITUDES The success of various attitude-change techniques also depends on the type of attitude we are trying to change. As we saw previously, not all attitudes are created equally; some are based more on beliefs about the attitude object (cognitively based attitudes), whereas others are based more on emotions and values (affectively based attitudes). Several studies have shown that it is best to fight fire with fire: If an attitude is cognitively based, your best bet is to try to change it with rational arguments; if it is affectively based, you're better off trying to change it with emotional appeals (Conner et al., 2011; Fabrigar & Petty, 1999; Haddock et al., 2008).

"While we're waiting for His Honor, may I offer the jury a selection of hand-dipped Swiss chocolates, compliments of my client?"

Henry Martin/The New Yorker Collection/www.cartoonbank.com

Consider a study of the effectiveness of different kinds of advertisements (Shavitt, 1990). Some ads stress the objective merits of a product, such as an ad for an appliance that discusses its price, efficiency, and reliability. Other ads stress emotions and values, such as ones for designer jeans that associate the brand with sex, beauty, and youthfulness rather than saying anything about the objective qualities of the product. Which kind of ad is most effective? To find out, participants were shown different kinds of advertisements. Some were for "utilitarian products" such as air conditioners and coffee. People's attitudes toward such products tend to be formed after an appraisal of the functional aspects of the products and thus are cognitively based. The other items were "social identity products" such as perfume and greeting cards. People's attitudes toward these types of products tend to reflect a concern with how they appear to others and are therefore more affectively based. Participants in the study reacted most favorably to the ads that matched the type of attitude they had. If their attitudes were cognitively based, the ads that focused on the utilitarian aspects of these products, such as the energy efficiency of the air conditioner, were most successful. If their attitudes were more affectively based, the ads that focused on values and emotions were most successful.

Attitude Change and the Body



one's head up and down, as people do when they say yes, might increase feelings of confidence compared to shaking one's head side to side, as people do when they say no. This is exactly what happened, with interesting consequences. When the arguments in the editorial were strong, people who nodded their heads agreed with them more than did people who shook their heads, because the head-nodders had more confidence in the strong arguments that they heard (see the left side of Figure 7.7). But when the arguments were weak, head nodding had the opposite effect. It gave people more confidence that the arguments they heard were in fact weak and unconvincing, making them *less* convinced than people who shook their heads from side to side (see the right side of Figure 7.7).

The moral? What people are doing when you try to persuade them makes a difference. Sitting in a soft, cushy chair at the computer store just might make you more comfortable with the idea of spending more on your new laptop than you had originally budgeted. Getting customers to smile even before they hear about your product may get them to transfer positive feelings to the item you're trying to sell them. And anything you can do to increase audience members' confidence in their thoughts about your message will make that message more effective—just as long as your arguments are strong and convincing in the first place.

Watch BODY MOVEMENT AND PERSUASION

Review Questions

1. One way to change someone's attitude is to get that person

3. A debate breaks out at the town hall meeting over whether

b. very low levels of fear are induced.
c. a plan for reducing the fear is provided.
d. the target of the communication is a utilitarian or functional object.

editorial
d. The head-nodders who heard strong arguments in the editorial

The Power of Advertising

LO 7.4 Describe how advertising changes people's attitudes.

As alluded to elsewhere in this chapter, many examples of when, why, and how we change our attitudes are provided by considering the influence of advertising. In many respects, advertising is a direct application of social psychology—it's a concerted effort to change the way that consumers think about and act toward a certain product. Consider, for example, this insight into human nature provided by perhaps the most famous (albeit fictional) advertising executive of recent memory, Don Draper, lead character of the TV show *Mad Men*: "People want to be told what to do so badly that they'll listen to anyone." Is this an exaggeration? Of course it is—you already know from the preceding sections that whether or not people listen depends on factors such as a message's source and the nature of a communication itself. But there remains a kernel of truth underlying the comment. Advertising *is* powerful, and people are surprisingly susceptible to its influence.

One curious thing about advertising is that most people think it works on everyone but themselves (Wilson & Brekke, 1994). But it turns out that people are influenced by advertisements more than they think, even when it comes to those annoying online pop-up ads (Capella, Webster, & Kinard, 2011; Courbet et al., 2014; Wilson, Houston, & Meyers, 1998). Evidence that advertising can change attitudes (and behaviors) is provided by successful public health campaigns. As we've dis-

Advertising is just one aspect of the broader category of marketing, the effort to communicate with potential customers about the value of a product or service. Hopeful entrepreneurs appearing on the TV show *Shark Tank*, for example, must make a compelling pitch to potential investors (i.e., the "sharks") to raise money for their idea. They have to market their product to the sharks by convincing them that they will also be able to market it to paying customers. The successful entrepreneur can use social psychological principles of attitude change to make any product seem attractive, personally relevant, useful, and even necessary.

Brain," 1991). Instead of presenting facts, soft drink ads play to people's emotions, trying to associate feelings of excitement, youth, energy, and attractiveness with the brand.

Of course, advertising is even harder if you have a product that does not trigger people's emotions and is not directly relevant to their everyday lives. The trick is to *make* your product personally relevant. Consider the case of Gerald Lambert, who early in the 20th century inherited a company that made a surgical antiseptic used to treat throat infections—Listerine. Seeking a wider market for his product, Lambert decided to promote it as a mouthwash. The only problem was that no one at the time used a mouthwash or even knew what one was. So having invented the cure, Lambert invented the disease. Advertisements for Listerine began to appear in countless magazines over the years, including one ad that today we would find incredibly sexist, depicting a solitary woman with the text "Often a bridesmaid, never a bride." This tagline became one of the most famous in the history of advertising, successfully playing on people's fears about social rejection. In a few carefully chosen words, it succeeded in making a problem—bad breath—personally relevant to millions of people. The sharks on *Shark Tank* (and Donald Draper) would be proud.

Watch THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF ADVERTISING

Subliminal Advertising: A Form of Mind Control?

Effective advertising tells consumers what they want, sometimes even before they know they want it. But what happens when we don't even recognize that an attempt at persuasion is underway? This question brings us to the idea of subliminal advertising. For example, in September 2000, during the heat of the U.S. presidential campaign between George W. Bush and Al Gore, a man in Seattle was watching a

The RATS incident was neither the first nor the last controversy over the use of **subliminal messages**, defined as words or pictures that are not consciously perceived but may influence people's judgments, attitudes, and behaviors. In the late 1950s, James Vicary supposedly flashed the messages "Drink Coca-Cola" and "Eat popcorn" during movies at his theater and claimed that sales at the concession counter skyrocketed (according to some reports, Vicary made up these claims; Weir, 1984). Wilson Bryan Key (1973, 1989) has written several best-selling books on hidden persuasion techniques, which claim that advertisers routinely implant sexual messages in print advertisements, such as the word *sex* in the ice cubes of an ad for gin, and male and female genitalia in everything from butter to the icing in an ad for cake mix. Key (1973) argues that these images are not consciously perceived but put people in a good mood and make them pay more attention to the advertisement. More recently, gambling casinos in Canada removed a brand of slot machines after it was revealed that the machines flashed the winning symbols on every spin, at a speed too fast for the players to see consciously (Benedetti, 2007).

Subliminal Messages
Words or pictures that are not consciously perceived but may nevertheless influence judgments, attitudes, and behaviors

Subliminal messages are not just visual; they can be auditory as well. There is a large market for audiotapes that contain subliminal messages to help people lose weight, stop smoking, raise self-esteem, and even shave a few strokes off their golf game. But are subliminal messages effective? Do they really make us more likely to buy consumer products or help us lose weight and stop smoking? Most members of the public believe that subliminal messages can shape their attitudes and behaviors (Zanot, Pincus, & Lamp, 1983). Are they right?

DEBUNKING THE CLAIMS ABOUT SUBLIMINAL ADVERTISING Few of the

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND THE BREASTS IN THESE ICE CUBES SINCE 1957.

The advertising industry is sometimes charged with sneaking seductive little pictures into ads.

Supposedly, these pictures can get you to buy a product without your even seeing them.

Consider the photograph above. According to some people, there's a pair of female breasts hidden in the patterns of light refracted by the ice cubes.

Well, if you really searched you probably *could* see the breasts. For that matter, you could also see Millard Fillmore, a stuffed pork chop and a 1946 Dodge.

The point is that so-called "subliminal advertising" simply doesn't exist. Overactive imaginations, however, most certainly do.

So if anyone claims to see breasts in that drink up there, they aren't in the ice cubes.

They're in the eye of the beholder.

ADVERTISING
ANOTHER WORD FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE.
American Association of Advertising Agencies

There is no scientific evidence that implanting sexual images in advertising boosts sales of a product. In fact, subliminal advertising is rarely used and is outlawed in many countries. The public is very aware of the subliminal technique, however—so much so that advertisers sometimes poke fun at subliminal messages in their ads.

& Claus, 2006). All the students were then asked whether they would prefer Lipton Ice or a brand of Dutch mineral water to drink. If students were not thirsty at the time, the subliminal flashes had no effect on what they chose. But if students were thirsty, those who had seen the subliminal flashes of "Lipton Ice" were significantly more likely to choose that beverage than were students who had seen subliminal flashes of the nonsense word. Several other laboratory studies have found similar effects of pictures or words flashed at subliminal levels (e.g., Bargh & Pietromonaco, 1982; Bermeitinger et al., 2009; Snodgrass, Shevrin, & Abelson, 2014).

Does this mean that advertisers will figure out how to use subliminal messages in everyday advertising? Maybe, but it hasn't happened yet. To get subliminal effects, researchers have to make sure that the illumination of the room is just right, that people are seated just the right distance from a viewing screen, and that nothing else is occurring to distract people as the subliminal stimuli are flashed. Recent research indicates that warning participants that someone is about to try to persuade them subliminally decreases the potential influence of such manipulations on their subsequent ratings of consumer products (Verwijmeren et al., 2013). And even in the laboratory, there is no evidence that subliminal messages can get people to act counter to their wishes, values, or personalities (Neuberg, 1988). Thus, it is highly unlikely that the appearance of RATS in the Bush campaign ad convinced any Gore supporters to vote for Bush. For more on the relationship between automatic thinking and consumer attitudes, check out the following Try It!

Try It!

Consumer Brand Attitudes

profit, but revenue) for 2016, according to *Fortune* magazine:

- Berkshire Hathaway
- McKesson
- Cardinal Health
- Boeing
- Microsoft
- Target
- Coca-Cola
- American Express
- Starbucks

familiar brand names. And the more easily a brand name comes to mind, the more popular, more successful, and even just flat-out better we often assume that brand to be. Of course, there is a wide and complex range of economic factors that contribute to a company's success; such questions are beyond the scope of our present focus. But for our purposes, this example provides yet another reason why advertising may pay off in the long run: we tend to think pleasant thoughts about that which is familiar.

Advertising and Culture

Ironically, the hoopla surrounding subliminal messages has obscured the fact that media messages are most powerful when people consciously perceive them. And it is important to note that in addition to trying to change attitudes towards consumer products via advertising, the media also shapes and reflects cultural attitudes in less direct ways. The attitudes we form toward women and men, members of different races, people of different ages, and so on, are all related to the manner in which members of these groups are portrayed in advertising, television shows, movies, and the internet. For a fuller discussion of how the media influences stereotypes, see Chapter 13.

And on questions of culture, there also appear to be notable differences across societies in the kinds of attitudes people have toward consumer products, perhaps reflecting the differences in self-concept we discussed in Chapter 5. As we saw, Western cultures tend to stress independence and individualism, whereas many Asian cultures stress interdependence and collectivism. These differences seem to predict the kinds of attitudes people have as well as how advertisements affect those attitudes (Aaker, 2000; de Mooij, 2014).

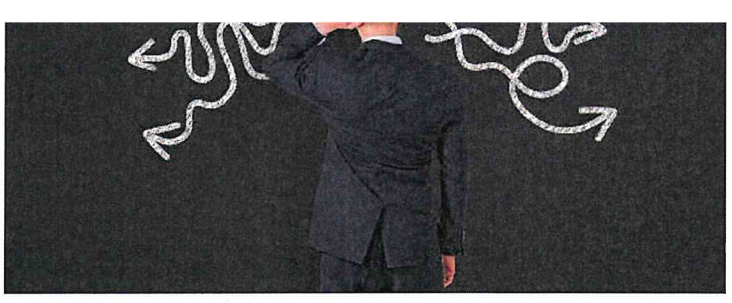
In one such series of studies, researchers created different print ads for the same

Cross-cultural studies of advertising have revealed various differences, such as the finding that American ads place a greater emphasis on individuality and Korean ads place a greater emphasis on interdependence and social groups. Interestingly, the frequency and nature of celebrity endorsements also varies by culture, with more than half of Korean ads including a celebrity, a rate far exceeding that of American ads. Celebrities are also more likely to play a role of some sort in Korean ads (see example above on right), whereas they appear as themselves, as spokespeople, in American ads (see example above on the left). According to Sejung Choi, Wei-Na Lee, and Hee-Jung Kim (2005), these tendencies reflect the importance of social hierarchy in Korean society, as well as a greater emphasis placed on consuming the very same products that famous individuals are consuming.

Review Questions

1. Research on public service ads designed to promote healthy behavior indicates that such efforts
   - **a.** almost always fail.
   - **b.** are more effective at changing the attitudes of men versus women.
   - **c.** are more effective via television than print ads when their target is young people.
   - **d.** are most effective when they are subliminal.
2. The best way for an advertisement to change an affectively based attitude is to use a(n) _____ appeal.
   - **a.** cognitive
   - **b.** behavioral
   - **c.** affective
   - **d.** fact-filled
3. Serafina, an advertising executive, is trying to figure out the best way to market a product that does not evoke a strong emotional, personal response from people. Her most effective strategy would be to adopt a campaign that focuses on
   - **a.** logical, fact-based arguments.
   - **c.** avoiding behavioral references.
   - **d.** subliminal strategies.
4. Research on subliminal influence in advertising demonstrates that subliminal efforts at persuasion are
   - **a.** less effective than people assume them to be.
   - **b.** more effective than people assume them to be.
   - **c.** more effective in individualistic versus collectivistic cultures.
   - **d.** more effective in collectivistic versus individualistic cultures.
5. Which of the following is true regarding cross-cultural comparisons of advertising?
   - **a.** Korean ads are more likely than American ads to focus on utilitarian products like shoes.
   - **b.** Korean ads are more likely than American ads to portray women and men in a state of complete or partial undress.
   - **c.** Korean ads are more likely than American ads to focus on family and concern for others.
   - **d.** Korean magazines have fewer ads than American

version of a virus to protect them from developing the full-blown viral disease upon subsequent exposure. Here's how it works for protecting against attitude change: By considering "small doses" of arguments against their position, people become more resistant to later, full-blown attempts to change their attitudes. In other words, having thought about the counterarguments beforehand, people are relatively immune to the effects of the later persuasive communication. In contrast, if people have not thought much about the issue ahead of time—for example, if they formed their attitude via the peripheral route—they are particularly susceptible to an attack on that attitude that uses logical appeals.



Thinking ahead of time about the various directions in which counterarguments might go can make you less susceptible to efforts to change your existing attitude.

In one study, for example, William McGuire (1964) "inoculated" people by giving them brief arguments against *cultural truisms*, beliefs that most members of a society accept uncritically, such as the idea that we should brush our teeth after every meal. Two days later, people came back and read a much stronger attack on the truism, one that contained a series of logical arguments about why brushing your teeth too frequently is a bad idea. The people who had been inoculated against these arguments earlier were much less likely to change their attitudes than were those in a control group who had not been inoculated. Why? The individuals who were inoculated with weak arguments had time to think about the limitations of these arguments, making them more able to contradict the stronger attack they heard 2 days later. The control group, though, never having thought about how often people should brush their teeth, was particularly susceptible to the strong communication arguing against frequent brushing.

Attitude Inoculation
Making people immune to attempts to change their attitudes by initially exposing them to small doses of the arguments against their position

Being Alert to Product Placement

When an advertisement comes on during a TV show, people often decide to press the mute button on the remote control or the fast-forward button on the DVR; we've also all learned to try to ignore pop-up ads and other efforts at persuasion

Most television and movie audiences are quite familiar by now with the idea of product placement. More recent releases have blurred—if not annihilated entirely—the boundary between advertisement and entertainment. In *The Lego Movie*, for example, where does the product placement end and the film begin?

in which adults smoked cigarettes, the more positive were their attitudes toward smoking (Heatherton & Sargent, 2009; Wakefield, Flay, & Nichter, 2003).

This leads to the question of whether forewarning people that someone is about to try to change their attitudes is an effective tool against product placement, or persuasion more generally. It turns out that it is. Several studies have found that alerting people about an upcoming attempt to change their attitudes makes them less susceptible to that attempt. When people are forewarned, they analyze what they see and hear more carefully and as a result are likely to avoid attitude change. Without such warnings, people pay little attention to the persuasive attempts and tend to accept the messages at face value (Sagarin & Wood, 2007; Wood & Quinn, 2003). So before letting kids watch TV or sending them off to the movies, it is good to remind them that they are likely to encounter several attempts to change their attitudes.

Watch RESISTING PERSUASIVE EFFORTS

Resisting Peer Pressure

We've seen that many efforts to shape our attitudes consist of appeals to our emotions. Can we ward off this kind of opinion change technique just as we can ward off the effects of logical appeals? This is an important question, because many critical changes in attitudes and behaviors occur not in response to logic, but via more emotional appeals. Consider the way in which many adolescents begin to smoke, drink, or take drugs. Often they do so in response to pressure from their peers, at an age when they are particularly susceptible to such pressure. Indeed, one of the best predictors of whether an adolescent smokes cigarettes or marijuana is whether he or she has friends who also do so (Allen, Donohue, & Griffin, 2003;

in and smoke that cigarette. But suppose that we have immunized Jake from such social pressures by exposing him to mild versions of them ahead of time, and showing him ways to combat these pressures. We might have him role-play a situation where a friend calls him a loser for not smoking a cigarette and teach him to respond by saying, "I'd be more of a loser if I did it just to impress you." Would this help him resist the more powerful pressures exerted by his classmates?

Several programs designed to prevent smoking in adolescents suggest that it would. In one, psychologists used a role-playing technique with seventh graders, very much like the one we just described (McAlister et al., 1980). The researchers found that these students were significantly less likely to smoke 3 years after the study, compared to a control group that had not participated in the program. This result is encouraging and has been replicated in similar programs designed to reduce smoking and drug abuse (Botvin & Griffin, 2004; Chou et al., 1998).

A number of interventions designed to prevent smoking in adolescents have had some success. Many celebrities have lent their names and pictures to the effort, such as actor Jackie Chan, who was the spokesperson for an anti-smoking campaign in Taiwan.

When Persuasion Attempts Backfire: Reactance Theory

Suppose you want to make sure that your child never smokes. "Might as well err on the side of giving too strong a message," you might think, absolutely forbidding your child to even look at a pack of cigarettes. "What's the harm?" you figure. "At least this way my child will get the point about how serious this is."

Actually, there is harm to administering strong prohibitions: The stronger they are, the more likely they will backfire, actually causing an *increase* in interest in the prohibited activity. According to **reactance theory** (Brehm, 1966), people do not like feeling that their freedom to do or think whatever they want is being threatened. When they feel that their freedom is threatened, an unpleasant state of reactance is aroused, and people can reduce this reactance by performing the threatened behavior (e.g., smoking, dating the person your parents told you to stay away from). Have

Reactance Theory

The idea that when people feel their freedom to perform a certain behavior is threatened, an unpleasant state of resistance is aroused,

this chapter, efforts at persuasion are not always effective. We aren't hopelessly at the mercy of those who would seek to change how we think and act. So the next time you are watching television and an ad comes on for a particular brand of pain relief medicine (or you see a product placement in a movie), you can actively consider what steps you might take to resist the impact of advertising. That is, assuming that you do not want to be at the mercy of the advertising industry—you might not think it is worth the effort to muster your defenses against ads for pain relievers. But what about attempts to get you to vote for a particular political candidate or to develop positive attitudes toward cigarettes? So remember, despite the extensive research literature demonstrating the wide range of factors that can change our attitudes, we are not automatons that must march blindly to the tune of anyone who tries to influence how we think. Sometimes it is worth the cognitive effort to ask ourselves how much we want to be influenced by persuasive communications and then take specific steps to avoid that influence.

Review Questions

1. The concept of attitude inoculation indicates that we are better able to resist a later attempt to change our attitudes when we are first exposed to arguments that
   a. support our existing attitude.
   b. are weakened versions of arguments we might hear later.
   c. prevent us from considering alternative viewpoints ahead of time.
   d. lead us to pay more attention to peripheral cues.
2. Which of the following is the best explanation for why product placement can be effective at changing attitudes?
   c. Inoculated attitudes
   d. Negative attitudes
4. Which of the following concepts relates to the ironic research finding that the stronger the warning against a certain attitude or behavior, the more people sometimes wish to exhibit it?
   a. Attitude inoculation
   b. Peer pressure
   c. Implicit attitude
   d. Reactance theory

titudes are based mostly on people's beliefs about the properties of the attitude object. *Affectively based attitudes* are based more on people's emotions and values; they can be created through *classical conditioning* or *operant conditioning*. *Behaviorally based attitudes* are based on people's actions toward the attitude object.

- **Explicit Versus Implicit Attitudes** Once an attitude develops, it can exist at two levels. *Explicit attitudes* are ones we consciously endorse and can easily report. *Implicit attitudes* operate outside of conscious awareness.

LO 7.2 Analyze the conditions under which attitudes can predict behavior.

- **When Do Attitudes Predict Behavior?** Under what conditions will people's attitudes dictate how they actually behave?
  - **Predicting Spontaneous Behaviors** Attitudes predict spontaneous behaviors only when they are relatively accessible. *Attitude accessibility* refers to the strength of the association between an object and an evaluation of it.
  - **Predicting Deliberative Behaviors** According to the *theory of planned behavior*, deliberative (nonspontaneous) behaviors are a function of people's attitudes toward the specific act in question, subjective norms (people's beliefs about how others view the behavior in question), and how much people believe they can control the behavior.

audience. The *elaboration likelihood model* specifies when people are persuaded more by the strength of the arguments in the communication and when they are persuaded more by surface characteristics. When people have both the motivation and ability to pay attention to a message, they take the *central route to persuasion*, where they pay close attention to the strength of the arguments. When they have low motivation or ability, they take the *peripheral route to persuasion*, where they are swayed by surface characteristics, such as the attractiveness of the speaker.

- **Emotion and Attitude Change** Emotions influence attitude change in a number of ways. *Fear-arousing communications* can cause lasting attitude change if a moderate amount of fear is aroused and people believe they will be reassured by the content of the message. Emotions can also be used as heuristics to gauge one's attitude; if people feel good in the presence of an object, they often infer that they like it, even if those good feelings were caused by something else. Finally, the effectiveness of persuasive communications also depends on the type of attitude people have. Appeals to emotion and social identity work best if the attitude is based on emotion and social identity.
- **Attitude Change and the Body** People's confidence in their thoughts about an attitude object affects how much they will be influenced by a persuasive communication. People's confidence can be affected by such things as whether they are

advertising reveal interesting differences that converge with other cross-cultural findings in social and self-perception.

LO 7.5 Identify strategies for resisting efforts at persuasion.

- **Resisting Persuasive Messages** Researchers have studied a number of ways by which people can avoid being influenced by persuasive messages.
- **Resisting Peer Pressure** Teaching kids how to resist peer pressure ahead of time can make them less vulnerable to it later on.
- **When Persuasion Attempts Backfire: Reactance Theory** According to *reactance theory*, people experience an unpleasant state called reactance when their freedom of choice is threatened. Attempts to manage people's attitudes can backfire if they make people feel that their choices are limited.

Revel Interactive

Shared Writing **What Do You Think?**

What is one specific lesson you can take from this chapter in trying to be more effective in persuasive communications (or more effective about resisting the persuasive efforts of others)?

Test Yourself

1. All of the following are true about attitudes *except* one. Which one is false?

   a. Attitudes are related to our temperament and personality.

2. Paige wants to buy a puppy. She does some research and decides to buy an English Springer Spaniel rather than a Great Dane because they are smaller, more active, and good with children. Which type of attitude influenced her decision?

d. Marquel believes that it is hard to remember to wear his seat belt.

4. People will be most likely to change their attitudes about smoking if an antismoking advertisement

   a. uses extremely graphic pictures of how smoke can harm the body and warns of the risks of smoking.
   b. gives people subliminal messages about the risks of smoking as well as recommendations of how to quit.
   c. uses graphic pictures of the damages of smoking on the body and then provides specific recommendations on how to quit smoking.
   d. uses success stories of how people quit smoking.

5. Emilia would be most likely to pay attention to facts about the danger of AIDS during a school assembly *and* remember the facts for a long time if

   a. the speaker emphasized statistical information about AIDS throughout the world.
   b. the speaker emphasized how the disease has spread in her community and there isn't anything distracting Emilia from listening.
   c. the speaker emphasized how the disease has spread in her community and at the same time Emilia's best friend is whispering to her about a big party that weekend.
   d. the speaker is a nationally known expert on AIDS.

6. You are trying to sell a new electronic toothbrush at the airport to busy, distracted travelers. Which of the following strategies is *least* likely to be successful at getting people to buy a toothbrush?

they are distracted by their children.

8. Suppose that while you are watching a film at a movie theater the words "Drink Coke" are flashed on the screen at speeds too quick for you to see consciously. According to research on subliminal perception, which of the following is true?

   a. You will get up and buy a Coke, but only if other people start to do so first.
   b. You will get up and buy a Coke, but only if you prefer Coke to Pepsi.
   c. You will be *less* likely to get up and buy a Coke.
   d. You will be no more likely to buy a Coke than if the subliminal messages were not flashed.

9. All of the following are examples of ways to resist persuasion *except*

   a. making people immune to change of opinions by initially exposing them to small doses of arguments against their position.
   b. warning people about advertising techniques such as product placement.
   c. forbidding people to buy a product.
   d. role-playing using milder versions of real-life social pressures.

10. According to reactance theory, what of the following public service messages would be *least* likely to get people to wear seat belts?

    a. "Please wear your seat belt every time you drive."
    b. "Wear your seat belt to save lives."