

# Cognition and Behavior

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**CONNECTIONS**

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# Chapter 1

## How can someone benefit from an understanding of psychology?<sup>1</sup>

What psychological information could someone benefit by? How does self-help or therapy work? Those two questions are similar because through many self-help or therapy exercises someone gains a greater understanding of psychology. Therapy and psychology can help someone because they reflect more on their thoughts and their emotions and this helps to change them. There isn't any advanced psychology in non-civilized populations (at least I don't think since they don't have any education system), however they also don't have the same mental health problems.

But psychological information can be used for self-improvement as well. I should say that I am not a licensed psychologist, however I have a lot of knowledge and experience related to this. Clearly people learn from thinking about their emotions. Therapy or self-help is a focus on things you find important, like your mental condition. You could say that meditation works the same way - when you focus on yourself you can benefit.

Attitudes can take a long time to change. Emotion is complicated and dynamic. If you think about it, so is experience. But an attitude is simple - it is an attitude, everyone understands what an attitude is. It is a display of some bias or opinion about something. You have an attitude about something - you are displaying how you feel about that thing. You feel strongly about something, that is an attitude.

So it would seem to me that things can go wrong mentally, resulting in a mental problem, if the feelings you have toward certain things are too large. You could say that the person has an 'attitude problem'. But attitudes are simple. How the mind functions is much more complex. But people don't care about how the mind functions, they only care about things that are important to them like attitudes.

It is like when someone has a psychological problem, their attitude is too large. This large attitude causes the emotions that the person is experiencing to go out of balance. Emotions need to work properly, if you are feeling too strongly about one thing this could disrupt how you feel in general.

So the important question is - how could an understanding of psychology possibly decrease a strong attitude? That doesn't seem to make any sense, it would seem like the only way to decrease an attitude would be to show the person the opposite attitude, which isn't really that deep an understanding of psychology, it is just a basic simple idea.

So then you could really call anyone that understands that 'exposure to the proper influence over time decreases dangerous attitudes and feelings' is a psychologist.

Is psychology really that simple though? I know that there are lots of subtleties, but what are these subtleties about? People can be nice or mean in the wrong way. Depending on the circumstances, there are many different ways that someone can act. Each different way of acting socially could be analyzed and the person could work on that.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44930/1.2/>>.

It seems simple when I say it that way, but that is basically what this is about. You go through an experience of practicing exposure to the proper behavior. You need to also consider the reason the person developed the strong attitude in the first place as well, however. The person probably wants that attitude to be strong, that is why he or she developed it in the first place, you need to consider that the person doesn't want to change and likes being violent.

I am not suggesting that everyone with a mental condition is violent. Maybe they are the opposite, it is just more clear when I use violence as the example.

That is why I said before that the emotions need to be properly balanced - because something like someone getting too violent can throw how they feel out of function.

But surely there is an aspect of self-improvement that an understanding of psychology can give you. It might help you understand emotion better. The question then is, couldn't someone get an understanding of emotion naturally or by doing practically any type of other work?

By studying psychology you make your natural understanding of psychology more conscious. For instance you might notice to yourself certain points of observation when you are in the real world observing how emotion functions. You might be able to describe with words better the nature of emotion or an emotional response instead of just simply having a feeling for it.

## Chapter 2

# Psychology for Self Help<sup>1</sup>

- People have a certain understanding of their own actions. This is true for specific, individual actions where you can understand to different degrees what you are doing and if you are conscious of what you are doing - and this is true with more complicated actions and behaviors (such as a behavior that you have to think about or reflect on in order to understand what your action was.
- People have various beliefs about themselves, about the world, about what they are doing in the present time. These beliefs can influence your actions at any time. A certain belief can be brought up consciously (recalled or a new belief initiated) or a belief could have an unconscious influence on what you are doing. For instance a belief that you forgot you had or some bias you have.
- There are only a few basic personality traits that people can have. There is their moral disposition - if they are nice or mean. There is their energy level, their nervousness, their type of intellect or way of thinking. There is their social dispositions - extroverted, agreeable, etc.
- You can try and measure emotions in social interactions. For instance the emotion of love might only be present between two people who are in love occasionally. You could also try to measure it over a longer period of time, and try to observe certain indicators that point to if that emotion is occurring.
- Furthermore, in every social interaction there are going to be various emotions interacting with each other. This is a part of the 'mood' or 'atmosphere'. For instance there could be a humorous mood or a romantic mood, or maybe those two emotions/moods are interacting with each other during the interaction.
- This brings up the point that there are various ways someone can be conscious of their emotions. Someone may have an emotion, but that doesn't mean that it is easy for them to feel or understand that it is occurring.
- A mood or emotional state consists of a certain set of feelings (happy, sad, exciting, etc), in addition to having its own unique feeling.
- Emotion can cloud intellect. The various ways of thinking can be related to someones social disposition (if they are an introvert or an extrovert). Jung discussed the introverted type of thinking - "this kind of thinking easily gets lost in the immense truth of the subjective factor... the extraordinary impoverishment of introverted thinking is compensated by a wealth of unconscious facts." (Carl Jung, "Psychological Types".) He seemed to think that introverted thinking was defective somehow, yet more internal and possibly deeper unconsciously.
- Your thinking (conscious and unconscious) determines who you are and what you feel.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44906/1.2/>>.



## Chapter 3

# Unconscious Thinking and Feeling - And Cognitive Behavioral Therapy<sup>1</sup>

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a psychotherapeutic approach that addresses dysfunctional emotions, behaviors, and cognitions through a goal-oriented, systematic process. The name refers to behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, and to therapy based upon a combination of basic behavioral and cognitive research.<sup>2</sup>

A major aspect of CBT is to use an analysis of someones thoughts and feelings - how their feelings lead to thoughts and how their thoughts lead to feelings - as a way to help the person understand how they can change their thoughts and how this might help them change their feelings. Obviously they also analyze how thoughts and feelings relate to behavior as well.

But how much of someones thinking is unconscious? Someone can have a thought that they aren't aware of. They could have some belief, attitude, or thought process that they aren't aware of. A belief is something you are thinking that isn't a fact - which would be something you know to be true (or think you know to be true). So when I say that you might have some belief you aren't aware of that means anything you think that you aren't certain of. I would say that everything in the mind that you think is either a fact or a belief, or a more complicated thought that is more like a paragraph which would be describing something.

Surely when you are interacting with someone there is potentially a lot of unconscious beliefs and ideas you might form about the other person. You could be biased against them and not know it very easily. In fact, there might be subtle shifts in how you are biased against them many times during a conversation.

But is that what the unconscious is about - beliefs, facts, and ideas that you have that you aren't aware of? Or is it about deep motivations and powerful emotions that are influencing your feelings, thoughts and behaviors?

There is a lot of mystery behind what is happening in your mind unconsciously. That is why it might take a lot of work thinking about your own thoughts and feelings in order to change them. If you have some strong attachment or drive that needs to be changed - it is a powerful unconscious one, and you would need to do a lot of work over a long time in order to change how you feel.

I am not a licensed psychologist, but it is obvious that certain behaviors or ways of being can only be changed over a long period of time. If someone feels passionately about something, this cannot change instantly. That shows how any behavior might take a long time to change. People get used to acting a certain way and this can only be changed by showing them or practicing new ways of acting. They have deep unconscious beliefs and attitudes that are strong and reflected in many aspects of their actions. Such complicated and subtle behavior cannot change instantly because it is too complicated to change instantly

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44928/1.2/>>.

<sup>2</sup>Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive\\_behavioral\\_therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_behavioral_therapy) 9/8/2012

- if a behavior is complicated then it is going to take a long time to change because there are many things that need to be changed about it.

You might not notice all of the things that change, however if you think about it an attitude is probably going to have many associated beliefs and unconscious drives that need to be addressed. This is what experience is. It isn't simply that an attitude is large and needs to be decreased over time - there is also a learning process.

What can be said about this? If a motivation is large, then why does it take so long to change? It seems to me that if you describe the motivation as 'unconscious' it shows that it is very large, because most of the mind is unconscious. What does the word 'unconscious' bring up anyway? Is it merely a way of saying something is more significant than you would think because you aren't aware of its full impact?

Human beings aren't aware of a lot of things about themselves, that is why saying 'unconsciously' brings up so much. Even some action you would consider to be 'conscious' is really 'unconscious' because everything you do you don't know the full implications of.

## Chapter 4

# My Theories about Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy<sup>1</sup>

In 1991 Barnard and Teasdale created a multilevel theory of the mind called “Interacting Cognitive Subsystems,” (ICS). The ICS model is based on Barnard and Teasdale’s theory that the mind has multiple modes that are responsible for receiving and processing new information cognitively and emotionally. Barnard and Teasdale’s (1991) theory associates an individual’s vulnerability to depression with the degree to which he/she relies on only one of the mode of mind, inadvertently blocking the other modes. The two main modes of mind include the “doing” mode and “being” mode. The “doing” mode is also known as the driven mode. This mode is very goal-oriented and is triggered when the mind develops a discrepancy between how things are versus how the mind wishes things to be.<sup>2</sup> The second main mode of mind is the “being” mode. “Being” mode, is not focused on achieving specific goals, instead the emphasis is on “accepting and allowing what is,” without any immediate pressure to change it.<sup>3</sup>

Based on Barnard and Teasdale’s (1991) model, mental health is related to an individual’s ability to disengage from one mode or to easily move among the modes of mind. Therefore, individuals that are able to flexibly move between the modes of mind based on the conditions in the environment are in the most favorable state. The ICS model theorizes that the “being” mode is the most likely mode of mind that will lead to lasting emotional changes. Therefore for prevention of relapse in depression, cognitive therapy must promote this mode. This led Teasdale to the creation of MBCT (Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy), which promotes the “being” mode.<sup>4</sup>

The idea is that in the "doing" mode someone is trying to get to a better state. Therefore tension is caused and they are likely to spiral back downward into a depression. If someone is in the "being" mode they let their negative thoughts flow and ignore the negative state. That way they can pass out of it easily.

I think that this theory behind MBCT is very interesting in terms of how emotion and cognition interact. If you think about it, your emotional state of being upset about something is driving you to be in a state that is seeking out an answer. I think this method of therapy is basically just telling the person to say to themselves, "its ok, i don't need to react to my feeling upset, I can let this feeling and the unwelcome thoughts it generates or wants to generate pass".

But is that the full mystery behind what is going on when your mind enters one of these states? Each of these states is responsible for your way of thinking and feeling while you are in them, everything you feel and think in these states is being influenced by you either being upset, or just "being" and letting the thing

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44932/1.1/>>.

<sup>2</sup>Segal, Z., Teasdale, J., Williams, M. (2002). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. New York: Guilford Press.

<sup>3</sup>Segal, Z., Teasdale, J., Williams, M. (2002). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. New York: Guilford Press. p.73

<sup>4</sup>Herbert, James D., and Evan M. Forman. *Acceptance and Mindfulness in Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Understanding and Applying New Theories*. Hoboken: John Wiley + Sons, 2011. Print.

pass you by.

It seems to me like there are an endless number of other different "modes" someone can be in. They can be in a mode where they just want sex, for example. Is this just a different way of acting? It isn't. When someone is in a different mode, they want something, their feelings and their entire state is different, it is like they are a different person (for example 'bitch' mode).

So I guess then a different mode could be characterized by what happens in this mode. There are thoughts and attitudes that are characteristic of each mode. It is almost like a different personality, maybe sometimes someone acts nice, and in this mode they are really very different. But surely there are more modes than that.

I would say that there is a mode where you expect pleasure from other people. There is a mode where you are abusive, etc. Your attitude can change in many ways, and, in each of these ways, you are really in a different "mode" or are a slightly different person.

This is really a social thing then - you can be in a nice or mean mode, a mode where you are getting along with the people around you in a certain way. When someone is in the 'driven' mode of MBCT the person wants to satisfy whatever it is they are upset about. My point is that is just one mode of many different modes that a person can enter. People want satisfaction in other ways, maybe it is just in this mode that you are in a more extreme state such that it is directing your thoughts and feelings it is so powerful.

Emotion is powerful - these 'modes' are so powerful that they direct and influence your thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Emotion causes people to do things they didn't think about all of the time. Emotion itself communicates information - if you are in this emotional state, you are being informed by your emotions that you feel that way, so you might learn why you might be feeling that way.

You could say that the unique feeling of each emotion communicates a unique understanding. Some emotions are so strong they make you go crazy and you really are in a different mode. I think this shows how emotion influences your thinking. People are motivated by their emotions, they think differently because in these modes, when they are experiencing different emotions, they want different different things, their desires and preferences are different for that short, emotional, possibly moody time period.

So in the "being" mode it is like you are just being, and letting the emotional power flow through you instead of having it control you and influence your thoughts and feelings and behaviors. You are not driven, you are simply being.

## Chapter 5

# What is Thinking - or as Scientists name it - 'Cognition' ?<sup>1</sup>

In science, cognition is a group of mental processes that includes attention, memory, producing and understanding language, solving problems, and making decisions. Cognition is studied in various disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, linguistics, science and computer science. The term's usage varies in different disciplines; for example in psychology and cognitive science, it usually refers to an information processing view of an individual's psychological functions. It is also used in a branch of social psychology called social cognition to explain attitudes, attribution, and groups dynamics.<sup>2</sup>

There are various things people can do mentally that have been labeled as aspects of cognition such as processes like memory, association, concept formation, pattern recognition, language, attention, perception, action, problem solving and mental imagery. Traditionally, emotion was not thought of as a cognitive process.

Most of those seem obvious - it is clear how memory functions, you simply bring up a memory. Well, you might need to be in the right emotional state in order to bring up the proper memory. Sometimes certain memories are easier to recall than at other times, this is probably because you were thinking of closely associated things that helped you to recall the similar memory. Sometimes people might need to spend some time trying to pull up a memory.

Actually, now that I think about it, you could probably go into great detail describing how memory functions - however on the surface and for the most part it is simple and easily understood. People use their memories all of the time, so in a way everyone understands how memory works.

However, when you think anything aspects of memory are probably used because it is related to what you did earlier that day. When you say 'hi' to someone, or do anything really, you use your memory to compare that event to previous events in your life or earlier that day. Your mind is like a computer, there are lots of things it is comparing and contrasting all of the time.

How does this process work? It probably works emotionally as well as intellectually. Your emotions help you bring up other similarly emotional memories and associated thoughts. Each emotion means something - it has a symbolic representation like saying hi brings up the emotion for people or the idea you have of people in your mind.

But the interesting thing is how memory or thought relates to mental imagery. I said that emotion can be used to compare different thoughts and memories, but is mental imagery also involved there? There are going to be mental images associated with memories, thoughts and emotions. Therefore your mind is really comparing and contrasting lots of different thoughts, sensations, images, memories, and feelings all of the time.

An image means something. This is obvious if you think about art. People can 'think' visually basically. People can also think with their emotions, as it is clear that emotion can be informative. A thought could

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m44929/1.2/>>.

<sup>2</sup>Retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognition> 9/8/2012

be of an event, a memory, a group of related ideas, a group of not related ideas, an emotion. How could a thought be of an emotion? All emotions mean something, a thought that is of an emotion is just then an emotion with special significance that you have drawn more attention to in the form of a thought.

So a conscious thought is something that is clear to you. An unconscious thought is something that simply means something to you - it could be anything really. Anything that communicates information to your mind. Thought is really then informative, and the function of emotion then is simply to experience feeling.

But what kinds of information does thought communicate? It can communicate visual information, mathematical information, emotional information, various ideas and concepts, sensations, experiences, physical feelings and actions, mental feelings and actions, sounds - everything there is in existence that your mind can understand.

## Chapter 6

# Some Points on Emotion Theory<sup>1</sup>

- There are two types of observations in emotion theory, one type is general common observations (such as sex is good for someones emotional health) and the other type is functional observations (when an emotion stops at one second and another one takes its place, what is happening there, what are the emotions, why do they stop and start, etc (for example, if someone thinks a happy thought it might stop the negative thought completely) also, what are the degrees to which the emotion or thought is felt, is it completely gone etc.
- Emotions stop and start all the time, this stopping and starting might occur as sudden transitions or slow transitions, one emotion gradually fading into the other. That is not a complete explanation for how emotion functions, however. Humans would probably have several emotions occurring at one time, each emotion interacting with one or more other emotions and potentially causing them to stop, start, fade or increase.
- For instance, the emotions hate, love, painful emotions, sexual emotions, hopeful emotions, and humorous emotions are probably all constantly interacting with each other and being felt to some degree all the time. Those are only a few of the emotions/feelings that are probably felt a lot everyday.
- There are going to be observable patterns that occur with those emotions, for instance pleasure might relieve pain and make painful feeling go away.
- Life is intense and ongoing, so therefore intense emotion is probably maintained in humans all the time. These emotions might stop and start, someone could go from brief periods of intensity to periods of low intensity, but the point is there is that intensity that is felt and the continuous flow of emotional processing is ongoing.
- There are different emotional states that can change your outlook on life or how you might respond to a situation. Fear, anger, kindness and admiration are all emotional states that change how you might respond to events. You can also be in a state of readiness for certain emotions, you could be prepared to experience pain or pleasure or be in one of those states.
- Emotions are experienced consciously and unconsciously, the extent to which someone clearly feels an emotion is the extent to which it is conscious. If an emotion is being experienced but isn't under the awareness of the person experiencing it, by definition it is mostly an unconscious emotion because they are not conscious of it. Someone can experience a large emotion but that doesn't necessarily mean that the emotion is going to be completely under the awareness of the person experiencing it. They might describe the emotion as feeling like it is very large, but they might not be in touch with it (making it mostly unconscious). It is in this world of "seemingly larger emotions" that emotional processing takes place. Unconsciously there are many more emotions experienced than you are completely aware of that are being experienced. Therefore it is there, in the unconscious mind, that emotions interact in great depth and complexity, barely being felt consciously at times and with the person possibly only slightly aware that something emotional might be going on (unconsciously).

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41720/1.8/>>.

- Emotion is experienced differently for each person. An emotion evokes a certain emotional response in a person because that person is who they are, however we all share the same world and there are going to be significant psychological things in it that are generally considered to be significant by most people, such as death or love. Any individual has peculiarities and specifics about what might trigger a large emotional response, it wouldn't necessarily just be something that they "like a lot" but mostly things they consciously or unconsciously find to be significant.
- When emotion can stop and start, and there can be periods of intensity and low-intensity, it makes one wonder just how many different emotional states there are. For every mood in a social situation you could say is an emotional state. If there is a certain mood present, then the people are going to be feeling certain things and responding in a way that is correspondent to that mood. But that is just social moods, there are many other ways people's emotional state can change, if you are working on something you enjoy working on you could be in a certain emotional state for that.
- An emotional state implies a certain set of feelings that come up with a certain activity or under certain circumstances.
- An important observation to note in emotion theory is that pain can stop the current flow of emotion or feeling and alert the person. Pain and anxiety are different from the other emotions because they are unpleasant. How often is an emotion like hope or fun tainted by the emotion of pain? Is fun even an emotion or is it an emotional state? Fun would imply that you are experiencing a set of emotions that makes that circumstance fun, joy is an emotion, "fun" is more of an emotional state.
- The flow of someone's feelings can stop suddenly, for instance, say you are relaxing in bed after waking up, then your alarm clock goes off - you went from feeling happy, relaxed emotions to those suddenly ending. Emotions and feelings stop and start like this all the time. In a conversation, for example, someone could be happy and the other person could show or adopt a negative expression and that could suddenly end the other person's happiness. There are many emotions someone could adopt in a conversation such as shyness, or an emotion expressing a thought or an idea, and these emotions could influence (or start and stop) emotions that the other person is experiencing. It should be clear that the many emotions someone experiences throughout the day changes all the time, stops, starts, transitions, and changes in complicated ways all the time. These changes may or may not be observed, however if you pay attention to these feelings and their behavior you could certainly notice a lot more.
- Emotion can motivate thought. People go into different states or 'modes' where they are driven to think a certain type of thought or do a certain type of behavior. When someone enters a different mode, such as a pleasure seeking mode, that mode in particular is motivated by emotion. It is clear that with pleasure someone is feeling more, so you would say that it is motivated by emotion. However, every state someone is in, every different subtle social emotional state or emotional state when someone is doing work is going to have some emotion or set of feelings behind it. But it isn't just a set of feelings, the feeling is unique each time, and this uniqueness communicates certain information that is also unique. The feeling tells you what you like and what you don't like, that would probably be the primary emotions (pleasure and pain). But each other emotion communicates something - if you feel guilty you know what that feeling means, maybe that feeling in combination with other feelings is communicating something different or unique based upon the set of feelings it is and what it means in that context.
- Therefore someone could enter into a mode such as an abusive mode, where, emotionally, they are being abusive. It makes sense that since this is a mode, it takes a reasonable period of time to experience. It isn't an expression or a gesture, which takes a couple of seconds, but a mode like this my guess would be at least a few minutes long. Another mode could be a humorous mode. Maybe that is clear by the person being observed as being amused - but maybe emotionally they are amused for a certain period of time before and after your observation of them being that way.
- That isn't to say that someone couldn't experience amused feelings for a few seconds. Clearly when someone laughs the feelings mostly only last for the period of the laughter. But they would probably still be amused for a period afterwards. You just laughed - and you become happy or amused for a short period after that. My point about the modes is that there are certain powerful sets of feelings that

last for a while - like a pleasure seeking set of feelings. That is different from laughter or amusement, this is a strong specific mode that brings up a set of feelings for someone. Maybe someone else has a different sort of mode - maybe they have a strong mode where they feel guilty, and they have a unique set of feelings and thoughts that are with this mode.

- Some of these modes might be a reflective mode, where you are in period that is reminiscent of the activity you were just doing. Other modes might be powerful ones, abusive ones, submissive or dominant ones, calm ones. It is as if someone gets in a 'mood' for these modes. Moods are more quiet however, and there are only a few moods that people recognize. However, there could be many different unique moods as well. What then is the difference between a mood and a mode? In a mood you have different emotions, maybe someone gets in an abusive mood. That would be like getting in an abusive mode. I think it is just a matter of how strong the mood or mode is. Moods are probably less strong than modes, and modes are also ways of acting, not just ways of feeling. In a mode the emotions are so strong that they influence your behavior - the emotion motivates thought.
- One emotion can lead or transition into another emotion. For instance, someone can rage, then become angry instead of being in a rage over a certain thing, and then the emotion could die down to the person just being hateful at whatever the cause is. That is similar to if someone is punched, they might be at first angry, then upset, and then depressed or sad. Anger can lead to hate, or 'being upset' - and then after that the emotion might transition into sadness or whatever might follow someone being hateful. Maybe the lesser emotion of hate is bitterness. So they would go from being hateful to being bitter. Or maybe if someone is talking to them positively, they could go from being hateful to being happy or optimistic.

An explanation for this chapter:

An emotional state is a very complicated thing. If someone knew completely their emotional state, they would know everything they were feeling right then. Then they wouldn't really have any "unconscious" emotions, because they would be perfectly conscious of what they were feeling. But then again, it is impossible to feel the full force of all your feelings at once, so it is not possible to be completely conscious of all your feelings. Your unconscious feelings must be dimmed down, or only large in a way that isn't completely conscious. Like you know you have a large emotion, but aren't in touch with it.

Emotional states are complicated, it would be easy to say, "my emotional state right now is really messed up" because that is what emotional states are like, people have several emotions they are experiencing all the time, it is just hard to identify that this is occurring because I would say that people can only identify when they have a large, clear emotion that they can understand.



## Chapter 7

# Actions and Explanations<sup>1</sup>

There are different ways of knowing how to do something - you can think you know how to do it, and understand everything about how you should do it properly in your mind, but when it comes to doing it, it doesn't actually work out that way. This is important because it shows different ways of understanding how the world works, one way is a practical one and the other way is an internal one that you can think about to yourself.

For example, when you are doing something that you know how to do, you might do it automatically without thinking, or you may pause and think about how to do it or what you are doing throughout the process.

People seek reasons and explanations for their intentions. When you intend to do something, you usually know why you want to do it, however you might also seek additional reasons and explanation. Sometimes you are in a state of mind where it is more appropriate to seek reasons. If you are intending to do something, then you might be looking for additional reasons why you want to do it.

When you intend to do something, some combination of beliefs and facts goes through your mind. You have reasons to do it, and you are thinking about the beliefs and facts that you will use when you do it. For instance even something simple, like turning on a light switch, you have the belief that switching it on will turn on the light, and you have the fact that almost every time you did that before the light did indeed turn on. That is a simple example, there are much more complicated and even unconscious beliefs and facts that you understand before doing certain actions.

1. *Actions, simple or compound, are events.* For instance, anything that happens takes a certain amount of time to happen - this is an event. People label a certain complicated number of things happening into an 'event'- such as a game or a meal or a party. Every action can be a part of a larger whole - drinking is a part of the event 'meal'. The 'meal' is part of the event 'visiting friends'. Everything in life is part of something larger, and everything has its own smaller components. Practically people keep this simple and don't overly analyze the details, but it can be done.
2. *One action may have many significant properties.* This would be the different ways of describing events or the parts in them. So for instance while drinking is a part of a meal, the drink tasting good is a property of the drink or 'drinking'. Furthermore, there is a certain relationship between the descriptions - 'tasted good' - and the events - 'drinking'. The relationships are always casual, conventional and circumstantial. In the casual case the drink tasting good is made true because drinks are liquid and liquid often tastes good. In the conventional case drinks taste good because of a rule - all food or liquid has a certain taste. In the circumstantial case the drink tastes good because you happened to find a drink that tasted good. So, as you see, there are these different ways of looking at and analyzing how the properties of an event or action relate to the event or action. Also, these properties are ways of describing the action.

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m43786/1.1/>>.

3. *Actions are events that are intentionally performed by agents.* Actions are events that are brought about immediately by the agent. If they aren't brought about immediately, then something else is doing the action, and it isn't the action of the original agent, it is the action of the second agent or third or fourth, etc, agent. An action is performed intentionally if it has one intentional description - you can describe how it was the intention of the agent. If you foresee that you are going to do an action, it still wouldn't be intentional unless you desire to do the action (have a pro-attitude about it). If you don't desire to do an action you might knowingly be doing the action, but that doesn't mean that you are intentionally doing it. When you do something with intent, you have a better understanding that you are doing that action - there are many things you could do with little understanding that you are doing it, but then it isn't really intentional. If, on the other hand, you have a desire to do the action, then it is probably more intentional.
4. *Actions may be intentional under various aspects.* So one action may be the best option for you, it is more intentional than other things you might have intended. An action might also be partially not intended, for instance some of the action you are doing could be a more automatic process (such as the movements of your muscles), and if viewed that way that part of the action isn't as intentional.
5. *Any intentional description can be quoted in explanation of an action.* Explanations are relative to background knowledge. Explanations may start off more basic and simple, and progress towards more complex ones or the final, satisfactory explanation that shows the goal.

An explanation for an action is best when it eliminates the other possible explanations for that action. An explanation should point towards causes, not otherwise irrelevant factors. However, if the background knowledge of the person you are explaining the action to is insufficient, it may fail to count as an explanation because of the way in which it engages with the background knowledge of those seeking enlightenment. A statement which explains an event must give us a casual understanding; and the understanding it gives us must be an advance on the cognitive status quo. In a phrase, the explanation of an event must advance us in the search for the event's causes.

Three sorts of advancement in casual understanding, and there may well be others, can be characterized as causal embedding, casual excavation and casual enrichment. We embed an event casually when we point to its immediate origin; we excavate it when we turn up its remoter springs; and we we enrich it when we see how one or another features is the legacy of its ancestors.

A description provides a good explanation when it advances us in our search for the causes of the action. The first explanation of an action is most simple - it points to its obvious or immediate origin - the further explanations progressively reveal more and more. The explanation of an action also shows how the action was the desire or belief of the person doing the action. They desired to see that action done, that is why it was intentional on their part. It may also be the belief of the person doing the action that the action is being done. Furthermore, as the action progresses, so too will the desires, beliefs and understanding about it progress.

The desires and beliefs people have when performing actions can vary from very simple ones (usually for instance when someone is performing a simple action), to very complex ones (for instance some sort of complex motivation or goal). There is also the potential appeal of promise-keeping. With some actions the goal you have is very strong or motivated, and you 'promise' to yourself that the goal is going to be achieved.

What we seek now is a feature in the perceived appeal of promise keeping which would let us understand the surprising property in the desire it occasions, that the desire prevails over powerful competing urges. What feature in the cause could have passed on this property to the effect?

There are at least four different ways in which the casual enrichment required in this question is provided. All of them have in common that they locate the operative feature of the prompting cause in the agent. The first would relate it in a long term policy or commitment on the agent's part, the second to the agent's motivational profile, the third to his character or personality, and the fourth to his social position. The idea is that the perceived appeal of promise keeping, granted that it has the feature of engaging someone with such and such a policy, profile, personality or position, passes on to the desire occasioned the property of outweighing certain opposed desires. Some remarks will be useful on the invocation of the factors mentioned since the explanations in which they appear constitute the major action accounting varieties over and beyond

the explanations, i.e. the explanations of (non-ultimate) desires.

So some motivating factors are long-term policies or commitments on the part of the agent, his or her motivations, character or personality, and their social position. These desires might overcome various opposed desires.

An agent has a policy, such as the policy of keeping promises come what may, when he makes an unconditional judgment in favor of those actions which he sees is future offering for him, that fulfill promises. It is not just that he finds them qua fulfillments of promises attractive or compelling, a state which would leave him free not to perform them, finding them unattractive under other aspects. He selects in all their particularity those actions that he foresees; he decides resolutely for them. Such a policy resembles a state of intending something in this regard. What distinguishes it is that whereas the intending is fulfilled by a single action, however complex, the policy remains intact and directive no matter how many actions have satisfied it.

So, basically, a person has the same motivations for the actions he or she does over time. He intends one thing, and then does many actions that will fill this intention. Even when he accomplishes his intention, the drive behind the intention is still there.

An agent's motivational profile is constituted by the state of his emotions and drives. Emotions are passing states of feeling which are not associated with any very restricted class of action: fear and jealousy, shame and joy, despair and sadness, may sensitize agents to any of a number of promptings and may lead to any of a variety of actions. They are associated with characteristic circumstances of arousal and they usually issue in distinctive involuntary expressions. Drives on the other hand are passing states of feeling which are pointed much more definitively towards particular tracks of behavior: avarice and envy, revenge and ambition, hunger and lust, are primarily identified by the promptings to which they make us responsive and the actions which they lead us to perform. Like emotions they have characteristic circumstances of arousal but they do not have such distinctive involuntary expressions. As states of feeling, emotions and drives have in common the fact that it does not make sense, as it would with a policy, to think of an agent revoking them: they are conceived of as unwilled, if sometimes welcome, visitations.

Clearly emotions and drives are going to lead people to do various actions. They would also help motivate and power certain actions while the person is doing them. Drives might prompt us to do things, and emotions might also make us more responsive to our desires to perform actions.

An agent's character or personality consists in deeply enduring and only partially controllable habits of mind and heart whereby he may be distinguished from other individuals. It is often described by the use of words associated with certain emotions and drives, the implication being that the agent has a susceptibility to those states. Thus we have fearful and jealous, avaricious and envious, people as well as having the emotions of fear and jealousy and the drives of avarice and envy. Personality is often characterized too, not by habits of the sensibility but by habits of thought. When we speak of someone as obsessional or judgmental, or when we characterize his belief patterns as fascist or xenophobic, we are ascribing personality just as much as when we describe his affective dispositions. In either case we are focusing on something in the agent which, like his policies or her motivational profile, may mean that a given prompting occasions a distinctively powerful desire.

So, depending on a person's personality, different triggers are going to elicit different drives and motivations. When you describe someone's beliefs, actions and values you are describing their personality as well. You could label certain characteristics of a response that is associated with certain emotions or drives.

Finally, an agent's social position, in a slightly unusual use of the phrase, is the frame constituted by the relationships with other people which constrain his behavior at any time. The traffic warden seeing children safely across the road, the bank clerk considering a request for credit, the tourist office attendant giving information to visitors: these are examples of people who so long as they exercise the activities described are in highly visible social positions. Like the other factors mentioned, position is something on the side of the agent which can mean that a given stimulus to desire is exceptionally potent, and that the desire occasioned has the feature of readily prevailing over competitors.



## Chapter 8

# Social Cognition: Meaning and Beliefs<sup>1</sup>

Meaning generation is the way someone interprets the world, the meaning they make from various stimulus. They then can use this meaning as 'meaning action' - which is the behaviors that follow because of the meaning that was generated (or just the action that follows directly from the meaning you interpret).

First, we shall compare the two processes from the viewpoint of eliciting conditions. Whereas meaning action is initiated by the representation of incoming stimuli, meaning generate is initiated either by the initial meaning established through meaning action or by both the stimulus representation and previously established meaning values. The latter is the case when no initial meaning could be established at all, or not to the degree and extent sufficient for eliciting some defensive or adaptive response. Under these circumstances the combination of the meaning values attained through meaning action generally yields such an ambiguous profile, full of gaps and uncertainty nodes, that the representation of the original stimulus, insofar as it still exists or can be reconstructed or reestablished, must be resorted to.<sup>2</sup>

So if you have some sort of meaning that is generated in your mind, then incoming stimulus could trigger a behavioral response - or meaning action. Or a response could be elicited by both your understanding and your previously established understanding. If you cannot establish a new understanding, you probably are going to rely on a previous one. The way your mind interprets everything is so complex that you might just resort to your initial response (or intellectual representation) that you had about the stimulus.

Second, from the viewpoint of function, the task of meaning action is to establish those meaning values which by virtue of their signal or cue function may trigger adequate defensive or adaptive responses, or, alternately, orienting responses. Thus the role of meaning action could not be regarded as providing for a full-fledged identification of the input. Nonetheless, the combination of the meaning values yielded by meaning action makes possible some kind of identification of input. It is, however, a highly restricted or general identification, because it is established merely for the purposes of immediate reaction. As a rule, initial meaning does not include anything that might correspond to a "conception" of the input but only the bare minimum of meaning values with signal value. At its poorest, initial meaning consists only of one meaning value, as in the case of the male stickleback, who in the breeding season attacks within his territory anything with a red patch, the patch sufficing to identify an adult male stickleback with the nuptial marking of an intensely red throat and belly. At its best, however, initial meaning includes a few meaning values that may mediate identification in a pars-pro-toto manner. In contrast, the task of meaning generation is to establish comprehensive meaning, which not only provides for identification of the input on a much broader basis but also includes the personal relevance of the stimulus situation for the individual. By virtue of its orientative contents this comprehensive meaning

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m43782/1.1/>>.

<sup>2</sup>Kreitler, H. + Kreitler, S. (1976) "Cognitive Orientation and Behavior" Springer Publishing Company, New York.

predisposes the individual toward a certain course of molar action. Thus, comprehensive meaning is anchored in action, unfolds for the sake of action, and directs action to no less degree than initial meaning. But while the orientative impact of initial meaning is much more immediate and direct, the orientative impact of comprehensive meaning is the product of more meaning values, interrelated through more complex relations, and subjected to further cognitive elaborations. Hence the bond of comprehensive meaning to action is less direct and immediate, more complex and equivocal. However, it is evident that molar no less than submolar behavior is directed and shaped by meaning from its origins to its completion, marked by evaluation of its outcomes. Even exploratory behavior is not elicited automatically whenever repeated meaning actions following several evocations of orienting responses have failed to establish an adequate and sufficient initial meaning. As in the case of other forms of molar behavior, its elicitation depends on the products of meaning generation and certain elaborations of these products.

So a stimulus-response could be very simple, like how insects respond to each other. Humans respond sometimes in a similar fashion, they take only one stimulus or trigger and respond based off of just that, without conceptualizing it or interpreting something in a more complex way. There is going to be some sort of personal relevance a stimulus has for the person, this is going to make the response and the mental processing involved much more complicated.

Third, from the viewpoint of processes, meaning action may be described as scanning stored schemata, reconstructing these schemata into meaning values, and matching these reconstructed models against the stimulus representation. This set of processes, designed to establish initial meaning, is enacted at least partly in parallel. Meaning generation, too, is anchored in this triad of scanning-reconstructing-matching processes, but each process in the triad is more elaborate than in the case of meaning action. Within the framework of meaning generation more meaning dimensions are used as questions, general hypotheses, or restricted expectations that guide the scanning process. Moreover, the scanning procedures themselves may be more complex. If we assume that there exist search strategies different in complexity and refinement, then meaning action is restricted to the use of the simplest, fastest, and most superficial strategy, whereas meaning generation also utilizes the more elaborate, intensive, and sophisticated ones. Similarly, in meaning action reconstructing is manifested mainly in combining the retrieved elements into some kind of model; in meaning generation it is manifested also in generating the elements to be combined in the model. As a consequence of the relative complexity of scanning and reconstructing, the product of meaning generation and the matching procedure to which it is subjected with regard to the input representation are also far more elaborate. For example, as compared to initial meaning, comprehensive meaning consists of many more meaning values representing many more meaning dimensions. In fact, potentially any of the 21 meaning dimensions may be used. The relations between the meaning values themselves are rendered more complex, for instance, by bonding two meaning values, each reflecting a different meaning dimension, by means of a relation reflecting a third meaning dimension different from those reflected by the bonded meaning values. Also, the complexity of the relations increases in view of the fact that any two meaning values may be related in terms of more than one relation, and may be embedded within the context of several units of interrelated meaning values. This would exemplify enhanced use of the principle of successive contextual embedding characteristic of meaning. Further, the relations between meaning values and the referent are also richer in the case of comprehensive meaning. Whereas initial meaning makes use primarily of the attributive and comparative relations and perhaps minimally also of the exemplifying-illustrative relation between meaning value and referent, comprehensive meaning also uses to no small extent the metaphoric-symbolic relation. This implies that comprehensive meaning also includes elements of personal-subjective symbolic meanings and not only components of interpersonally shared lexical meaning. Inclusion of personal symbolic components introduces into comprehensive meaning the complex interaction characteristic of this mode of meaning. In sum, both meaning action and meaning generation are sets of processes for the elaboration of meaning. Yet since meaning generation uses more widely and extensively the available possibilities for the elaboration of meaning, the product

of meaning generation is richer in contents, more complex and differentiated in structure, as well as stronger and more general in impact than the product of meaning action.

Meaning-action, which is the meaning your mind uses when directing behavior, is more simple than meaning-generation, which is how your mind develops more rich, complex information and meaning. In meaning-action your mind can scan stored ideas that you have and use them in its behaviors, and it uses it for initial meaning. When meaning is generated, the same triad of scanning-reconstructing-matching processes is used, only it is more complex. With meaning-generation, new models are formed, with meaning-action, stored models are used (as this is faster). You generate new meaning when you have to think in new ways, compare different sets of ideas together, look at the information presented to you in a new light. Personal-subjective and metaphoric-symbolic meaning is also interpreted in the overall meaning (or comprehensive-meaning). There are much more advanced processes your mind can use when not directly trying to respond to stimulus as it does with behavior, when it thinks more deeply much more complex constructs are formed.

Fourth, from the viewpoint of major directing factors, it should be stressed that the only focal object of meaning action is the exteroceptive and/or proprioceptive input. Meaning action is designed merely to furnish material for answering the question "What is it?" insofar as it refers to the input. The relation between the resulting answer or absence of answer, on the one hand, and the ensuing response, on the other hand, is regulated either by innate factors or by prior learning. In any case, the meaning values established through meaning action suffice to higher levels of elaboration. Whatever the result, there is clearly no need for assuming a "What-to-do?" question in addition to the basic "What-is-it?" question. In contrast, meaning generation is assumed to establish the comprehensive meaning of the input. This also includes the personal relevance of the input. Hence, meaning generation is regulated by two focal questions, "What does it mean?" and "What does it mean to me and for me?" Whereas the first question is an elaborate form of the central question "What is it?" that guides meaning action, the second question is new and specific to meaning generation. It raises the issues of personal relevance, but only insofar as action is concerned. For the sake of clarifying this question it seems advisable to present it also in some rephrased forms, such as, "Does it affect me at all?", "In what way does it affect me?", "Am I concerned in any way?", "Should I be concerned?", "Am I moved personally?", "Should I be involved?", "Is any action required on my part?", "Am I to act or not?" Foreshadowing concepts and processes explained and discussed later, we venture to introduce yet another more technical rephrasing of the same question: "In which sense(s) does it or may it affect (or concern) my goals, my norms, my beliefs about myself, and my beliefs about the environment or any of its aspects?" Evidently, the formulation "What does it mean to me or for me?" is merely a label summarizing these different variants of the question.

So for all the stimuli in your environment (when you see something or when you need to think about something that you become aware of), your mind asks yourself various questions (unconsciously) such as, "Does this involve me personally", "Am I to be moved or not", "What is it", "What does it mean", "Am I to act or not", etc. This is important because, unconsciously without your awareness, you are asking yourself these questions about various inputs and things in your environment all of the time. You are constantly analyzing things and going through a complex thought process that you aren't aware of.

Fifth, from the viewpoint of conditions specifying termination of the process, meaning action and meaning generation again differ markedly. Meaning action either terminates when meaning values are established that trigger innate or conditioned responses, or it develops gradually into meaning generation owing to the occurrence of signals for molar action. The conditions under which meaning generation terminates are far less clearly delineated. All too often the meaning values established in the course of meaning generation do not pertain directly to the referent, that is, the input itself, but to aspects of its meaning established in previous stages of meaning processing. Thus, they are meaning values of meaning values. This is obviously the case with regard to those aspects of comprehensive meaning that relate to the personal relevance of the input. In principle, meaning generation could go on for a very long time. Moreover, even in the next stage of cognitive elaboration, conditions may

arise that necessitate repeated meaning generation in order to produce missing information. Thus, in a certain sense, meaning generation overlaps with the next stage, or at least is kept smoldering in anticipation of further possible utilization. Hence the difficulty of specifying precisely when meaning generation stops. In practice, however, meaning generation subsides and is replaced by other forms of cognitive activity when sufficient information has accumulated to make possible an answer to the question "What does it mean to me and for me?" insofar as action is concerned. If the answer specifies "action is required," the next stage of cognitive elaboration is initiated by the new question, "What am I to do?" If, however, the answer is "no action required," meaning generation does not necessarily stop. It may continue for a while in order to attain adequate coding for the purpose of memory storage or simply for the sake of curiosity or maintaining cognitive activity. Yet it usually terminates because new inputs may dominate the scene of cognitive processing.

So the thinking process that involves behavior (meaning action) terminates when a behavior response is necessary. So that means that you think, then you stop thinking when you need to respond with a behavior. Or you start thinking about the way in which you are going to actually do the response instead of thinking about the 'meaning' behind it. Meaning generation, on the other hand, can continue in a long string of connected ideas, not necessarily connected to the stimulus. Your mind is kept aware of if this information might be useful in the current world you are in. That would be the question, "What does it mean to me and for me". When people think, that question is always being considered unconsciously. Your mind then asks the questions, "Is action required", and then "What am I to do?".

Beliefs are different from how your mind processes 'meanings':

First, a belief is a cognitive unit and not a behavior or a predisposition to behavior. This is another of the major features distinguishing the concepts of belief and attitude. In contrast to attitude, which is often regarded as a predisposition to action and sometimes as referring to actual emotions, perceptions, or behaviors, belief remains always sharply distinct from the behavioral output. Unlike attitude it cannot even be inferred from any behavioral act other than verbal or nonverbal communication of the belief. Similarly, an important reason that precludes identifying belief with a proposition in the logical sense is that a proposition depends on the possibility of assigning to the statement a truth value, which is often equivalent to the operational implications of the proposition. Nonetheless, belief has behavioral implications, which are reflected in what we call its orientative aspect. Since the orientative value of a belief may change indefinitely in different contexts it makes no sense to us to identify belief with its behavioral implications or, for that matter, with its truth functional value.

Beliefs are less related to actual behaviors than predispositions to behaviors and attitudes. Attitudes are similar to behaviors because they are emotional in the current time, and that is going to influence behavior or be a predisposition to action. You cannot infer or guess beliefs like you can guess someone's attitude. Beliefs still have behavioral implications, however. They orient a person towards certain actions - a person with such and such beliefs is likely to perform such and such actions.

Second, there are no restrictions on the object, source, foundation, or informational support of the meaning values that comprise a belief, nor on the contents, source, rationality, consistency, commonness, salience, foundation, or veridicality of the belief itself. In other words, all these qualities seem to us immaterial to the characterization of belief as a unit. In this respect as well beliefs differ from most other similar cognitive units. For example, whereas the object of attitude is mostly assumed to be some class of stimuli represented through an object or some abstraction endowed with a minimal degree of constancy, the object of beliefs may be any aspect of the external or internal environment regardless of its constancy or endurance. Similarly, qualities of attitudes like centrality or salience seem to us inconsequential since they are apt to change with the behavioral context. In other words, any belief may become prominent in a situation that sets a priority on the meaning of the specific belief.

So a belief may be very powerful or salient in certain circumstances. It may come from any source, be rational or irrational. I think what they were trying to say is that beliefs can come up at any time, you

don't understand them as clearly as something like an attitude. A belief could choose anything as its target or object (a belief might influence one thing in your mind or in the outside environment). You never know what situation might set a priority on the meaning of a specific belief (certain beliefs are going to be more relevant in different circumstances).

Third, beliefs may be conscious, not conscious but accessible to consciousness, or entirely subconscious. This implies that an individual need not be aware of a belief or of its implications for the belief to be a functionally active unit. Indeed, it is plausible that all too often we ignore, if not our beliefs, at least most of their implications. Here again belief differs from attitude and other cognitive units.

It makes sense that your beliefs are not going to be conscious. Beliefs are things that can arise at any moment from the subconscious, they are usually too complex to be formed in an instant in a situation. Furthermore, when they arise when you are doing an action, you might not be aware of it but it could still play a role with what you are doing with that action. There might also be many implications for beliefs you have, they don't need to surface at all but their implications might have an impact.

Fourth, many different media can be used for expressing beliefs. Consequently, no special connection should be assumed between beliefs and language or between beliefs and sentences in general or even a particular syntactic form of a sentence. Not only are there subverbal beliefs in the prelinguistic stage, but even human adults have many beliefs that are wholly or partly a verbal or subverbal. Yet we assume that in principle any belief can be expressed verbally in the form of a sentence. Nonetheless, the precise linguistic form through which a belief is expressed seems to us irrelevant. For example, the forms "His mother loves him," "He is loved by his mother," "His mother's love for him," etc., are all equivalent from our point of view.

So when a belief arises in a situation, you don't necessarily have to form a sentence in order to make this belief known or expressed to you. There could be different ways in which you 'know' that the belief is now involved or that you evoked that belief. You could get a feeling for that belief, you could change in a certain way, etc.

Fifth, beliefs are not necessarily permanent or even enduring units. In this too beliefs differ from attitudes and other cognitive units, which are commonly endowed with at least some degree of endurance. Some beliefs are retrieved from memory or stored in memory for later use. These are permanent to some extent. Others may reflect an enduring core of meaning but be transient in form, that is, they may be expressed in a certain context in a particular linguistic or other mode that is later discarded or forgotten. Beliefs may also be produced on the spur of the moment simply to serve some specific purpose. Such beliefs, which are the products of instantaneous generation, may be of varying endurance.

So while an attitude is something you hold for a certain period of time, a belief is something that you can just say to yourself in an instant. However, it is still that the belief has an impact on your behavior or just has some impact on you for a certain period of time after you say the belief or bring it up. You don't even have to verbally say the belief to start its effect, you could just enter a period of time where it seems like you are under the influence of a certain belief. For example maybe for 5 minutes you start acting like the belief 'humans are nice, so you should be nice to them' is true. Maybe you brought that up yourself unconsciously, or maybe it was triggered by something external.

Sixth, a belief is a unit of indeterminate size that may be contracted or extended to a certain degree in accordance with the requirements of a situation and of an individual. In this respect a belief resembles such cognitive units as "chunks" in learning, sentence in linguistics, and proposition in logic, but differs from other units, mainly attitudes. The extensions occur in the form of elaborations append to a certain nucleus that functions as the core of the belief. These elaborations often assume the role of specifications imposed on the more general meaning of the nucleus. For example, the nuclear unit may

be "Belief is a cognitive unit," whereas potential appendable specifications could be "of indeterminate size," "with an important function for molar behavior," "consisting of concepts," "accepted by some investigators," etc. The number of these appended elaborations is potentially infinite but is practically limited through the requirements of the context.

So if someone has a belief, say 'I should be nice because other people are nice', then this belief may be modified in many different ways that could have an impact during an interaction. For instance someone could modify that a little by adding a 'maybe' before it. The core of the belief would always be that quoted statement, however it could be modified and changed in many different ways depending on the situation. It may even be changed in ways that aren't possible to verbally describe, but its nature would still be different.

Seventh, as a unit of meaning each belief is embedded in networks of beliefs and other units on the same level as beliefs, as well as on other higher and lower levels of comprehensiveness. In this respect belief resembles all other major types of cognitive units, although the nature and extent of the auxiliary networks differ. Contextual embeddedness not only implies relations with the preceding and succeeding beliefs that form a kind of immediate environment for the focal belief; it also includes relations with beliefs that may not actually occur in a particular situation but are closely allied to the focal belief. For example, there may be beliefs that support the focal belief; exemplify it, for instance by personal memories; are derived from it, perhaps by a method similar to "evaluative assertion analysis"; or form presuppositions necessary for its understanding. Frequently beliefs are embedded in a hierarchy as, for instance, a hierarchy ordered in accordance with preference, generality, credibility, or utility with regard to a particular purpose, and so on. Finally, each belief is also embedded in more comprehensive structures. Those include, for example, constellations of the beliefs centered on some criterial referent as the "belief system", the group of attitudes, or the "semantic field" as conceived in linguistics. A similar group of beliefs, which we call belief cluster, is of important in our context. WE define it as a constellation of beliefs focused on a certain theme, which is represented by means of at least one specific meaning value shared by all the beliefs included in the belief cluster. ON a higher level, the grouping of beliefs may become more inclusive and take the form of a doctrine, ideology, or faith, or even of the totality of all the individual's knowledge. WE do not share the common assumption that more inclusive groupings of beliefs are necessarily subject to the striving for consonance and balance. The wider and narrower contexts in which a belief is embedded constitute a kind of tacit knowledge that turns each belief into the vertex of pyramid, a point beyond which increasingly large domains of knowledge unfold the closer we approach it. This implies that each belief is a sample from a much larger constellation of beliefs on various levels. Practically it means not only that the strength or utility of a belief for the individual as well as for a researcher depend on this submerged population of beliefs but also that certain margins of error are allowed the researcher in sampling beliefs from the invisible, actual, and potential ocean of beliefs.

Beliefs help to answer the question, "what does this mean", or "What does this mean to me and for me?", or "what am I to do?". When bringing up a response, not just one belief might be the answer - each belief is related to many other different beliefs that might also have an impact on you. There may be a hierarchy of beliefs that relate to the purpose you brought up one of the beliefs for. It may not be possible to tell which beliefs are related to the purpose at hand, many different things could have an impact on our thoughts and our emotions that we aren't aware of - beliefs, attitudes, other thoughts, etc.

## Chapter 9

# Personality and Interpersonal Behavior<sup>1</sup>

Robert Freed Bales identified a number of personality dispositions and their corresponding interpersonal behaviors in his book "Personality and Interpersonal Behavior":

### **Toward material success and power**

The member located in the upward part of the group space by his fellow members seems active, talkative, and powerful, but not clearly either friendly or unfriendly. He is neither clearly value- or task- oriented, nor is he expressively oriented against the task. In the realization of his own values he seems to be trying to move toward material success and power. "Our modern industrial and scientific developments are signs of a greater degree of success than that attained by any previous society." "There are no limits to what science may eventually discover." "Let no one say that money is of secondary value-it is the measuring stick of scientific, artistic, moral and all other values in a society."

This type of person overestimates himself and his powers, and is likely to see himself as valuable for the other group members. He is not likely to contribute positive feeling to the group. He probably wants the other group members to be resentful of him, probably due to his over valuation of money and power. He probably ignores negative reactions to himself, seeing himself as much better than he actually is.

### **Toward Social Success**

The member located in the upward-positive part of the group space by his fellow members seems to be socially and sexually extroverted, ascendant but at the same time open and friendly. He encourages others to interact to express themselves and give their opinions, but he is neither clearly for the group task nor against it. In the realization of his own values he seems to be trying to move toward social success and popularity. "The most important thing in any group is to maintain a happy, friendly atmosphere, and let efficiency take care of itself." "Cooperation is far more enjoyable and more desirable than competition." "There are always plenty of people who are eager in to extend a helping hand."

This member has an over-expanded image of himself and his social success and importance in the group. He is personally involved, and he and the other group members know it. He rates himself as warm and personal and sees himself as understanding - at the same time he is the person most likely to rate others highly on understanding. He tends to take a position of receptive leadership vis-a-vis others in the group; individuals frequently respond to him and address their ideas to him, and he does not try to "talk them down."

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m43728/1.1/>>.

## Attributions

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### **Cognition and Behavior**

This collection of some of my articles describes how people think, that the mind can be made up of many complex and interacting ideas and thoughts, that these ideas influence behavior, and that emotion is involved.

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