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Entry #1: Halloween at The Plaza

So, last year I spent my Halloween in Arcata, CA. Needless to say, I was slightly impressed/overwhelmed by the traditional festivities. Being a college town, I expected to see some houses lit up and music blaring, maybe some drunken stragglers stumbling in the street, but Arcata was much wilder than I had imagined. At the center of this petite town stands a statue of President William McKinley, denoting his memorial, post-assassination. The statue is in a small grass park not much larger than 3 full-sized basketball courts. Bars, boutiques and restaurants line the plaza and make for a quite, comfortable little resting place. Apparently, it is tradition that all of the Humboldt State University students crowd the plaza on all hallow's eve and wreak havoc on the town square until morning; this is just what I experienced. I, along with everyone else that took part in this rowdy celebration, was of course dressed up in a quickly fashioned costume. It was a sight to see all the students dressed up so brilliantly and creatively, and even more astounding to see them all intoxicated and carelessly meandering the town square. This small courtyard was filled shoulder-to-shoulder, with young adults filled with all kinds of substances. Even more shocking was that in the middle of it all was a group of kids hanging on the statue, chugging beers, tossing out pills, screaming, yelling, dancing and chanting. Interestingly enough, the local authorities were present, but it was as though they were protecting the crowd from the extremely intoxicated or violent offenders. Police officers lined the square, but I only witnessed them interfere with 2 individuals the whole night. One was passed out in the gutter and they pulled him out to check his vitals and eventually call him an ambulance. The second was an older individual who seemed to be looking for a fight or more drugs. He was screaming

gibberish and accosting whoever crossed his path. Though this is not behavior these students would typically engage in, Halloween provided a mask, physically and metaphorically, for each participant that led to a night of extremely inebriated shenanigans. This is a perfect example of contagion theory, deindividuation, conformity, group dynamics and of course, the power behind mind-altering substances.

The first social psychological concept, contagion theory, states that crowds have the profound effect of hypnotizing individuals and ultimately resulting in irrational, uncommon and emotionally empowering behavior. One believes his/her existence in the group provides support and stability, thus protecting the individual when unusual situations arise. This is a product of the social comparison theory, which states that people compare themselves to others in times of inquisition or doubt. With this in mind, it's not surprising that many people behaved so mindlessly and wildly; everyone around them is doing it, it must be acceptable, right? WRONG! If it were day time or any other night that wasn't a holiday, people would not be openly consuming drugs and alcohol in the streets, and they definitely would not be climbing and dancing on McKinley's statue; it's almost as though Halloween was the full moon for our werewolf students. It's interesting that the holiday itself, not just the masks and costumes, acted as a buffer for the unusual behavior. This collective of parties aided in the deindividuation of each participant. With a large group of people, intoxicants and physical masks present, it's no wonder there was so much erratic behavior. Deindividuation states that people lose a sense of self and are more likely to engage in deviant behavior while in the presence of a large group. It's as though they feel, since they are part of the group, anything done is done in the name of the group and any opposition would be inferior to a collective so

large. They aren't worried about negative repercussions because, once again, the group "has their back".

The deindividuation is a sister concept to conformity. These people didn't set out that night with hopes and goals of dancing on statues, vandalizing benches, taking drugs, littering alcohol containers or any other unusual events of that night, but the ideas were reinforced and instilled because of the belonging to that group, the group of Area 51 Halloweeners. They are officially part of a mob and conform to the behavior of every other individual in the mob, even if it was something that resulted in cognitive dissonance. They dismissed the dissonance and justified the behavior because everyone else was engaging in said activities. This group seemed to be a very cohesive one: large portions of strangers travelling to house parties together, dancing and drinking together, laughing and crying together. No one was alone, or felt alone, that night, and that's what was the key factor in this mess of a night. The group also had unspoken rules, one being "don't be stupid". No one broke windows, no one looted, no one fought, no one took advantage of the other weakened individuals and no one allowed for any single domination of the group. It was a well functioning mob and it made for a great night. It's not something I look forward to being a part of again, but it was enjoyable to be in the moment with so many happy, rambunctious, fun-loving individuals.

Entry 2: Mom v. Marijuana

First off, some background information: since the introduction of the substance into my life, my mom has been relentless in trying to separate me from the marijuana culture. I've fought with her and justified my usage from every possible angle and she's yet to concede, and claims she never will. I am a functioning adult with two jobs, a full

course load and great relationships with my family members. I told her I am a Medical Marijuana patient for legal protection only, and my usage is, though frequent, relatively small and for purposes of insomnia and concentration. She has always taught me “moderation is key” and I stand by that. Needless to say, I love my mom, but it is awfully enjoyable catching her as a victim of Social Psychology.

Of the several social psychological concepts observed, most fall under the umbrella of impression formation and Anderson’s Information Integration Theory. Impression formation is the organizing and evaluating of personality traits others have in order to form an accurate impression, and is better explained by Anderson’s theory. The information integration theory states that “impressions are based on (1) the perceiver’s dispositions; and (2) a weighted average of a target person’s traits” (Kassin, Fein, and Rose 126). The weighted average takes into account positive and negative traits an individual is perceived to possess. According to studies on perceiver characteristics, we are known to compare others to our self and weigh our own traits as desirable to have. These desirable traits may fall into the category of central traits. Central traits are those that have a significant impact on the impressions we form about others (e.g. religious beliefs, morals, politics, etc.). Where central traits are not always positive or desirable, a significant impact on impression formation may also be due to the trait negativity bias. The trait negativity bias states that we have a tendency to weigh traits we particularly dislike as more than any combination of previously identified positive characteristics. This can be attributed to another element of social cognition, automatic vigilance, which is the tendency to dwell on undesirable information. Two more concepts I observed, simultaneously, while debating my mom were the ever-so-famous

confirmation bias in conjunction with Asch's implicit personality theory. The implicit personality theory says that we form a network of assumptions of other traits and behaviors based on present traits and behaviors. Similarly, confirmation bias is defined as the tendency for people to favor information that confirms what they already believe, regardless of its truth-value. Lastly, the concept that is most apparent is her need for closure. This is the need to find out more information as to cease any wandering thoughts.

With respect to my situation, the presence of marijuana in my life is something that skews my mom's impression of me. Apparently, using marijuana (even legally) is a negative trait that mothers weigh more heavily than other positive values (e.g. employment, grades, college acceptances, wonderful relationships, etc.). This follows Anderson's information integration theory; my mom has had a history that predisposed her to be against drugs and as a result, she has a weighted average of my traits, meaning each bad quality is not even in comparison to a good quality. As for automatic vigilance, that is something I suffer from as well. I try to judge people fairly, but certain pieces of information always rub you the wrong way. My mom is proud of me, loves me, and loves to be with me, but cannot stand that I use marijuana; she will always see it as a weakness or mistake she's made in raising me. Since one tends to perceive their own characteristics as favorable to have, my mom's history of straight A's and a mischief free young adulthood cause her to interpret my, not so bad, behaviors as terrible thus weighing them more (because of trait negativity bias) than my good behaviors. My mom's suspicion towards my consumption have led her to misconstrue many behaviors, situations and also caused her to develop false assumptions about me using other substances, me spending my money ONLY on weed, me missing a deadline or getting a lower grade ALL because

of the weed or me feeling tired and lethargic ONLY because of marijuana. This is confirmation bias and the implicit personality theory at their best. Her misjudgments and accusations often discourage me, but I know she can't help how she thinks so I just fill her need for closure with the truth and assure her that I can manage my life.

Entry 3: Alcoholics Anonymous

As a result of a possession of marijuana ticket I received late last December, I was court-ordered to attend 15 Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings. I went into each meeting open minded, but soon became discouraged at how easily I felt I could be manipulated in these rooms. Because the group is founded on anonymity, I won't use any real names or locations, but will try my best to illustrate the situations. The first meeting, I admitted to being an "alcoholic" even though I was not positive I was one, but did so to receive recognition from group that I was a newcomer. Each meeting I felt like I was able to identify with one or two people's "shares" in the room, but still could not come to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. Each meeting opened with a certain prayer and adjourned with another, and everyone takes part in reciting the verse. As a newcomer, I was still unsure of where I stood in the group and how I felt towards the program, but still took part in each prayer. If I didn't believe in a higher power, whom was I praying to? Was I just going along with it as to not feel guilty for believing otherwise? This dissonance of praying, but not believing plagued me throughout all 15 meetings, but I still prayed during each one. I feel like I did so to respect the members of the group and the tradition of AA. The fellowship of AA does a really good job of taking you under their wing and keeping you active in the program. After my third meeting, I was asked to help collect literature, then immediately following,

I was asked to clean up the chairs and wipe the tables...I complied. In another instance at a meeting, Interestingly enough, though the group is self supporting, at the close of each meeting volunteers are asked to sweep the floor and wipe down the tables, but NEVER did anyone raise a hand to help; it was as though they expected one of the other people on the room to assist. I got a strange, cultish feeling about AA, but I know typically its voluntary so one is in complete control of his/her actions. Its strange, I understand that the program works and even if I don't believe in committing myself to any certain faith yet, I still miss being there and treasure the bonds created by myself and my fellow alcoholics. I was grateful that this program, though preaching spirituality, did not impose Christianity or any other faith on me. The book states "god as you understand him" and also says that it is only meant to be suggestive. This may be to attract more followers and as the relationships develop, they will gain the power they seek.

This experience allowed me to identify numerous social psychological concepts related to group behavior and conformity. Though I was the victim, it was still a learning experience and I'm grateful I was able to identify the tactics used and slow down the process of indoctrination. Some of the concepts I identified were public conformity, social loafing, normative influence, the foot in the door compliance tactic and varying levels of obedience. Public conformity is a superficial change in behavior without a partnered change in cognition that is the direct result of real or imagined group pressure. Similarly, the term normative influence is used to describe an instance of conformity caused by the fear of appearing deviant. Another shameful piece of social psychology evident in these AA meetings was social loafing, which is the decrease in individual effort when it is perceived as a group project. This also touches on the theory regarding

diffusion of responsibility, which is the perception that with others present, it is not YOUR responsibility to assist the one in need. Other relevant observations include me falling victim to the foot in the door compliance technique, which states that complying with a small request prior to the real request will increase the chances of one complying with the real request. As for obedience, there were multiple occasions where people were called on to share and didn't want to, but did anyway. They also were asked, because no one volunteered, to read at the podium and lead/close meetings. Everyone also washed their coffee cups and obeyed the rules regarding cell phones, outside conversations, cigarette smoking and parking.

Personal instances of public conformity while attending these meetings included: praying with the group for spiritual wisdom, welcoming each alcoholic prior to their share ("My name's Jenna, and I'm an alcoholic." "Hi, Jenna!!") or gratuitously applauding each participant. These were all acts in which I engaged in to fake my enthusiasm (towards the last few meetings, it was no longer faking). I did not always agree with what was shared, what we were praying for or care to thank everyone for his or her participation, but I tried to blend in. I also feared rejection from the Old Timers and didn't want to disappoint these people that were trying so hard. It became apparent to me that group enthusiasm was what the group thrived on and caring for each fellow addict's sobriety was comforting and motivational. Alcoholics Anonymous claims to be self-supporting, but ironically, never have I been slapped so hard with social loafing and diffusion of responsibility. It was customary that, post-meeting, all the literature be collected and shelved, all chairs must be collapsed and stacked, each table broken down and sanitized and each mug and coffee pot be cleaned for the next day. When it came

time for the leader to ask for volunteers, never once did someone raise their hand without a bit of hesitation or guilt; everyone assumed (myself included) that another person would be happy to do the job. This was funny to me because each member prided him/herself on “being of service to their people”, yet a room full of “helpful people” couldn’t produce one truly grateful volunteer. Some meetings were different, people had assigned jobs, but it was made aware to me that this was coordinated by a sponsor, someone I was too intimidated to confront. For me, the entire program was intimidating and much of my participation was due to normative influence. I truly felt guilty and fearful if I wasn’t participating. I was even duped into a foot in the door compliance scam. After one meeting ended, I was asked to shelve the books, and there weren’t many, so I did. By the time I had finished, the others had left and I was then asked to stack the chairs and fold up the tables. I could have walked away, I was not obligated to help, but I feared disappointing this man and I knew I’d have to show my face the next day, so I complied. Towards the end I felt a hint of private conformity, which scared me. I didn’t like that, after laughing and opposing this group, I actually felt I could identify with several values of AA. I will say that being part of a large, powerful meeting was empowering and I understand why the program works. I also understand why people are so obedient in these meeting halls; all parts of AA are to be taken very seriously.

Entry 4: Psychology in Relationships

I recently had a mutual split with my girlfriend. We both were victims of the proximity effect. We met our freshman year at Humboldt State, and developed a very intimate relationship there. We helped each other adapt and grow to love our new home. Initially, I gained interest in her thanks to the what-is-beautiful-is-good stereotype. I

noticed her one-day and without even speaking to her had decided she was the most wonderful person I'd ever met. I had already associated so many positive attributes with her good looks. I was extremely lonely, moving by myself 750 miles away, and wished for much more human contact than I had. My newly joined rugby club met my need for affiliation. I had never felt so akin to so many guys. It was rewarding and different to have so much brotherhood, but I still needed intimacy. Through months of informal reciprocity, our relationship blossomed. It was clear that we were both crazy for each other and that made us both happy to no end. I also practiced reciprocity in accepting her freedoms and comforting her when she was in need. She reciprocated my kindness and so began a brilliant love affair. We moved away from each other at the end of the school year, we both didn't return to HSU either. We continued our relationship through the summer, but once a month visits were, sadly, not enough. We were both grateful for every minute and continued our reciprocity when planning vacations, but something was missing.

The proximity effect emphasizes the importance of shared daily experiences and how that diminishes with distance; after months of a Skype relationship, we called it off in order to preserve the love we still had instead of running the relationship down because of disappointment. Again, I experience loneliness. When one is so emotionally invested in another, you cannot just move on. I don't feel any urge to seek out affiliation and cure my loneliness, but I know that it will help; I just don't feel comfortable replacing her yet. These feelings of love, attachment, interdependence and cognitive happiness attributed to one person are indicative of an intimate relationship. I can happily say that I owe the prosperity of this relationship to our day-to-day reciprocity. We treated each other as

equals and understood that each individual must put effort in order to receive similar behavior in return. Our book defines loneliness as a feeling of deprivation about existing social relations; ironically this is what brought us together. We started to see each other daily and our deprivation was gone. Another concept identified, need for affiliation describes the pleasure derived from becoming members of social groups. This is important in maintaining relationships. We must gain satisfaction from sources other than a significant other to ensure we have something to return to if the bond breaks.

Entry 5: A Moment of Ignorance

The other day, my coworker and I were chatting and he made a sarcastic comment about calling our dishwasher Pedro, a typical Hispanic name and also another worker's name. When I told him that wasn't Pedro, he laughed and told me, "Whatever, they all look the same anyway." I immediately laughed, not because he was funny, but because he committed a fallacy of social psychology: he gave into the out-group homogeneity effect. Mistake number two was made when he said it'd be better if he was a white kid like us and we could actually talk with him. This is an example of in-group favoritism. Realistically, if the dishwashers spoke clear English, we'd be distracting them with conversation and the quality of work would drop; it really would not be better. Another concept applicable to this coworker's attitude was his categorization of the chefs, prep cooks and dishwashers as "the Mexicans". They may all be Hispanic, but some may be of another South American country other than Mexico. Judging by his blatant stereotyping and rudeness, he was relatively insecure, thus confirming Turner's social identity theory. His rudeness was offensive, but it helped that I could break down his behavior instead of just writing him off as a moron.

The concepts identified in this observation were the out-group homogeneity effect, in-group favoritism, stereotyping and the social identity theory. The out-group homogeneity effect is the idea that members of an in-group overestimate the similarities between and out-group or that members of an in-group have trouble distinguishing features of out-group members. This was exhibited by my coworker's comment on all the workers looking the same; he was unable to differentiate features of the two Hispanic men. The in-group favoritism my coworker possessed was revealed when he wished for a dishwasher similar to us so we could talk and befriend him. He discredited our current dishwasher because he didn't speak English, and discrimination against an out-group is considered in-group favoritism. Lastly, his pathetic attempt at stereotyping was blown when he came off as a dumb racist after calling the group of workers "the Mexicans". A stereotype is a heuristic used to portray a particularly positive or negative quality of a type of individual. I assumed his stereotype was based on their occupations that are solely manual labor. Again, this was rude, but a perfect example of discriminatory behavior.

Entry 6: Salt Creek Grill

I recently got a new job as a barback/busboy at Salt Creek Grill. After my first few shifts, I loved the work. I loved doing physical labor and loved hanging out around my coworkers every night; I also loved the large envelope of tips I received each night. Unfortunately, after a month of working, my intrinsic rewards for working had been outweighed by the extrinsic reward of cash. I definitely was not as enthralled with bussing tables a month after I started, but found myself always wanting certain shifts to maximize my income. Also, as the new kid, I was anxious to see that my bosses were impressed with my quality of work and personality. I try to be very upbeat and

meticulous when I'm working in order to seek out managerial approval. I also was anxious to assimilate into the large group of coworkers I had. I wanted to make sure they knew who I was and what I stood for in hopes of gaining a few friendships outside of work. Even if I'm tired or having a bad day, I put on a smile when I walk in and forget my troubles.

The social psychological concepts identified in my attitudes/performance at Salt Creek Grill are intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, the over justification effect, self-presentation, self-monitoring and the facial feedback hypothesis. Intrinsic motivation is the physiological reward gained from completing a task or challenge. In my case, feeling productive and exhausted after each shift. Extrinsic motivation is motivation in the form of an external reward like money, fame, trophies, etc. In my situation, getting a hefty envelope of tips each night was motivating enough to work hard, but I would become discouraged when it was slow or I got cut early because my chance at more money was lower. I was soon hooked for the money, not for the personal rewards of exhaustion and productivity. This refers to the over justification effect, which states that after being extrinsically rewarded, a behavior that produced intrinsic rewards no longer does so. My want for managerial acceptance is a perfect example of self-presentation. The theory of self-presentation states that we try to shape others' impressions of us; I did this by appearing neat, happy, cheerful and diligent to my authority figures. With regards to my want for social acceptance among my coworkers, that falls under self-verification. Self-verification is the process by which we try and get others to perceive us as we see ourselves. I exhibited this by conversing about my beliefs, hobbies, likes/dislikes, etc. with my coworkers. I wanted them to see me as me, not just the new kid. The fact that I

care to appear like a good investment to my bosses, but a good friend to my coworkers shows that I can regulate my behavior to meet social demands; this is known as self-monitoring. Of course, the need for acceptance and wanting to feel good about myself at work is all a part of having high self esteem, without it, I would be nervous mess. Also, the facial feedback hypothesis states that a change in facial expressions is likely to be followed with a corresponding change in behavior. I always put on a smile when I walk in because I know I will end up happier, rather than moping around because I don't want to be there.

Entry 7: Helping a Friend

The other day, I was riding my bike home from school and I passed a young adult, female, laying on the ground with her bike nearly in the street. I saw her lying there as I approached and was slightly confused. I initially rode about 10 feet past her, but quickly realized this was an emergency. It was extremely hot out, her position did not look like it was by choice and her expensive bike was almost being hit by speeding vehicles. I figured she had passed out from exhaustion so I called 9-1-1 and then a pedestrian asked what was going on; I sent him down the street to the fire department to inform them of our situation. Shortly after, help arrived and she was put in an ambulance and her belongings were gathered. I was in a hurry because I was supposed to take my sister to softball practice, so upon the ambulance's arrival, I gave them all the information I had about the situation and left. I almost regret not giving her my information, but am somewhat happy to know that I was a Good Samaritan and engaged in truly altruistic behavior.

Sure enough, when faced with this situation, I carried out the 5 Steps in Helping and also recognized a few other psychological concepts in my deed. The 5 steps are as follows: (1) noticing the issue, (2) interpreting it as an emergency, (3) taking responsibility for providing help, (4) deciding how to help and (5) providing the help. I noticed the issue from a distance and inspected the scene when I arrived. I quickly interpreted her lifeless body as an emergency and because no one else was around, took full responsibility in finding her help. After numerous first aid courses, I knew she was unconscious and saw that her body was free of any visible injury, and called 9-1-1. Once the officials had arrived to help her, my job was done and I rode home with a wonderful feeling of satisfaction and happiness. Altruism is defined as motivation derived from the desire to improve another's situation; I was truly altruistic here and did not even have to think twice about helping. Pluralistic ignorance is the belief that nothing is wrong because no one is reacting. When I initially rode past, I was a victim of pluralistic ignorance because 100s of cars had probably passed her already yet not one had stopped; I almost believed the situation was under control. The bystander effect states that the greater number of bystanders, the less likely each individual is to seek out help. Luckily there were no bystanders, so there was no diffusion of responsibility and I felt like I was forced to be the one in charge. This was evident when the pedestrian approached me and I immediately sent him to get help, and he cooperated. Also, the fact that there was no audience freed me of any feelings of judgment from my peers for being a helpful individual. In any other situation, I may have thought twice because audience inhibition describes the fear we have of making a bad impression on our observers. Needless to say,

this was a wonderful experience and though I gained no outside reward, feeling content and successful made my day.

Entry 8: Mothers of Hate

When we watched the *Mothers of Hate* videos in class I was shocked and surprised at how devout these individuals were. The video depicted mothers who supported white supremacy on the most extreme levels. They also conditioned their children to be hateful bigots and live a life of ignorance. These were wives and mothers of KKK members and also active members in the group. They were extremists to the point that they only affiliated, except for times of recruitment, with people of similar beliefs. They created a social life only consisting of Klan members and it was clear that they felt strongly about a white nation. For whatever reason, these people still believed that whites were the supreme race of America and no other race could possibly be better. These devout mothers even raised their children in Klan settings. They attended rallies, fundraisers, did homework in the Klan facilities, etc. This forced the beliefs upon the kids and the kids were at the mercy of a cruel environment. In times of recruitment, these hateful souls put on a smile and attempt to befriend fellow citizens. Only after the commitment to a friendship, are the harsh values of the Klan imposed on the recruits.

There were many identifiable concepts of social psychology in this film, some being: self-concept, social comparison theory, the peripheral route to persuasion, social dominance orientation, social learning theory and deindividuation. The first, self-concept, is the set of beliefs or impressions one holds about him/herself. With respect to the mothers of hate, I wonder what their self-concept is like? Do they accept hatred as a natural thing? Are they satisfied with intolerance? Apparently they are, and they must

have a skewed self-concept because no one can happily hate on such a massive group of people and ignore it. As for social comparison theory, this is the idea that one validates oneself by comparing him/herself to others surround that individual. In this case, these bigots have created a circle of hate in which no one who isn't hateful enough may enter. This allows for each individual to validate his behavior by observing the similar behavior all around him. It was stated that these people were kind individuals in times of need, but were quick to impose their ridiculous beliefs on you once you were brought under their wing. They use the nice-guy approach and the peripheral route of persuasion to recruit members. The peripheral route appeals to ones basic needs and requires no cognition other than just being attracted to the stimulus. They use this to hook others and attempt to indoctrinate them. Another sad belief these people have is explained by social dominance orientation. This is the belief in inferior and superior races or cultures; in our case, the mothers view whites are superior to every other ethnicity in the world. This is wrong and ignorant, not to mention hateful and selfish. As for deindividuation, the traditional hoods worn by Klan members hide the wearer's face and allow for complete anonymity. This condones extreme behavior and guilt-free approval from the other group members. This is sad to witness, but enjoyable to critique. Social learning theory states that individuals learn from their surroundings. In our case, these children are surrounded by hateful Klan members and have no choice but to adhere to their customs. This wrong and is direct conditioning and breeding of bigoted youth and we should not allow this to happen. These people feel very strongly about their beliefs. Their attitudes contain a cognitive, behavioral and affective component, which makes the attitude strong and difficult to

change. It is sad that such terrible displays of racism and prejudice still exist, but it's a reality we must face and the best we can do is stop the spreading of these beliefs.

Entry 9: Love at First Sight

The story begins at small party down the street from my old campus. I was new to dorm life and Arcata, CA, but decided to go out with a friend and meet people. From across the fire, I saw a girl who'd I'd recognized from my dorm complex; she was beautiful. I had only seen her on her laptop or reading in the grass, so I had the impression she was a mellow girl with little need for a large in-group. I was convinced she was the most "interesting" person in the world; there was some type of attraction I was unfamiliar with. She was beautiful in every way, each step she took. Falling victim to social psychology, I was convinced she was perfect for me and possessed each characteristic I longed for in a partner. Her beauty made the thoughts of her loving my hobbies, music, entertainment and having my sense of humor come so easily. I had never spoken to her before, but felt compelled to befriend her. After a friend introduced me, I was speechless. I wasn't used to things going my way and definitely not used to the girl of my dreams acknowledging my existence. I was shocked that she seemed interested. I could tell the smile on her face was natural and our conversation was effortless. I didn't necessarily know how to act because this was a new situation for me, but I kept it friendly and showed her I cared. Our friendship unfolded over the course of the semester and the relationship blossomed.

The elements of social psychology present in this entry are social perception, nonverbal behavior, personal attributions, the what-is-beautiful-is-good theory and the fundamental attribution error. Social perception is the idea of one another understanding

each other and this was present during the formation of our relationship. It also was evident in our preconceived ideas about each other. Nonverbal behavior is the expression of feelings (facial expressions, gestures, and vocal cues) without the use of words. I took note of her nonverbal behavior when confirming that she had taken interest in me. This increased my self-esteem and I liked being able to see immediate feedback/satisfaction from our newly founded friendship. Personal attributions are the internal characteristics or motives that lead to a certain behavior. In our case, kissing and holding hands can be attributed to our love and affection for one another. Sadly, if I'm taking the social psychology perspective, I must say that kissing or flirting could have been attributed to the being in college and at this age. An external situation eliciting a certain behavior may be known as a situational attribution. Also, I noticed that upon my first gaze, I linked her pure beauty to so many other wonderful thoughts about her, solely products of my imagination, and not based on any prior knowledge about her. This is known as the what-is-beautiful-is-good theory, which states that high levels of physical attractiveness may be accompanied by perceived thoughts of other positive characteristics. Though I stuck around and really got to know her; I was initially blinded by love, and a complete sheep in terms of social psychology. Also, with regards to the time in our lives and both being newly freed from our parent's clutches, I also committed the fundamental attribution error. I did not compare her actions to the actions, very similar, of our peers. We were all looking for love and fun, but I was not willing to believe that; I was sure there was something special. This specific entry has taught me that everyone can fall victim to social psychology and it is imperative to take these sadly true generalizations to heart

when making decisions. We must use the wisdom to benefit ourselves, not see our case as an exception and hope for the best.

Entry 10: Attempts at Inclusion

When working with kids in a winter day camp last season, I witnessed hours of playground drama. Each child repeatedly instigated one another. Fortunately, I was only responsible for one child at a time, whatever special needs child I was assigned for that time period. There were many cases when I had to remove my client from a situation because his aggression levels intensified so quickly. My client was a young male with bipolar disorder, who was nearly deaf (in need of hearing aides) and classified as emotionally disturbed. This poor child could only speak broken English because his inability to hear left him with speech issues. His mood swings made his aggression unpredictable and his strong emotions gave each act of defiance an eerie affective component. He told me how much he loved shooting people in his Xbox games and accurately re-enacted loading and firing weapons while smiling devilishly. He was born with neurochemical imbalances due to his mother's drug use during pregnancy and he lived in a home where love and discipline did not exist. He was one of the few children I had worked with whom I felt were hopeless and they would remain just as disturbed and only learn to mask it.

The social psychological concepts I was able to identify in this particular observation were all related to aggression and temperament. They are as follows: aggression, instrumental aggression, emotional aggression, socialization and gender roles, displacement, the frustration-aggression hypothesis and the weapons effect. Aggression is defined as behavior intended to hurt someone. This can be broken down into two

categories, instrumental and emotional aggression. Instrumental aggression has the goal of being internally or externally rewarded from the behavior, whereas emotional aggression is only to perpetuate the negative feelings. The books states that aggression may be increased in males due to higher testosterone levels, but this is applicable to females as well. My client was a pre-teen boy filled with hormones and frustration, unpredictable in everyway. Because he was so deviant, unpredictable and abnormally aggressive, we had to act in ways that supported the frustration-aggression hypothesis. This theory states that frustration always elicits aggressive behavior and all aggression is caused by frustration. We observed instances where losing became an issue and heightened his aggression so we took the precautions of rigging games or distracting him with incentives or alternative activities. We attempted to limit sources of frustration, but his reputation and physical disabilities taunted him and his pride was too much for him, so the aggression continued. One day, we were playing a game in which campers use a small pool cue to hit checkers into the small, netted corners of a game board. When it was his turn and his attempt failed, he snapped. He waved the cue at a counselor and upset the rest of the campers. Instead of the others laughing at his antics, they suddenly feared him. He would normally respond to our instructions or submit to our holds and restraints, but the presence of this weapon (cue) made him feel more powerful, and us powerless. The weapons effect states that aggression will increase with the mere presence of a weapon, and low and behold, it did. He was violent for a longer period of time, he was louder, angrier, more vulgar and more reluctant to submit. The particular client is a wonderful person with a caring heart, but his chemical imbalances and physical disabilities haunt him and trouble his daily development. I would like to hope he's doing well, but last I

heard he was sent to a type of school similar to a boarding school, but it provided 24/7 behavioral therapy and intervention.

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