

EXAMPLE ENTRY #1

I was in Glendale when I witnessed my behavior the perfect example of the **good mood effect** of social psychology. The **good mood effect** is the effect whereby a good mood increases helping behavior. I had just met a girl who I really liked and exchanged contact information, and we were going to meet up later that day, so my spirits were high.

Outside the mall they have an outdoor shopping center called the Americana, and near a crosswalk there was a homeless guy standing with an open hat inviting donations. I see the guy all the time when I visit Glendale, he's out there every day, and I usually walk right by, but I was feeling great, and I gave a guy \$2 for no reason whatsoever, which can only be explained by the good mood effect.

Then, at the Borders, I met some woman who was asking about a book which I had read and had recently watched the DVD of, by an author, and I stopped and talked with her about it and helped her with a recommendation to purchase the DVD instead of the book at a certain location I knew of a discounted price. As I was walking back to my car, a guy asked me for the time, and I gave it to him with a smile on my face. I'm normally generally a helping person, but my actions that day were the epitome of the good mood effect, far beyond my normal helping reach.

EXAMPLE ENTRY #2

I was playing guitar in my room when my brother's friend David came in, whom I never met before, and experienced first hand the social psychology concepts of **social facilitation**, the **mere presence theory**, and the **evaluation apprehension theory**. **Social facilitation** is a process whereby the presence of others enhances performance on easy tasks but impairs performance on difficult tasks. At the time of his entering I was working on learning a solo by my favorite guitarist Omar Rodriguez, which was quite difficult for me, and I found it became impossible to focus and be in my own zone or to be creative in practicing because of his presence. This explains the aspect of social facilitation that the presence of others increases difficulty on already difficult tasks. I stopped, let him play a little, and we conversed for a while. When he gave me my guitar back, I showed him some easier material that I knew, and found it easier to get in the rhythm and to let go, explaining the opposite spectrum of the social facilitation concept, in which easier tasks become easier. In short, the riffs and techniques I had already internalized became easier, but the stuff I was working on but couldn't play competently became harder.

The **mere presence theory** is the proposition that only the presence of another is sufficient to produce social facilitation effects. Later I came to know that he was a successful guitarist, who had been in multiple bands, and at the time I was a bedroom player at most, and that knowledge further clarified the effect that I was feeling was in alignment with the **evaluation apprehension theory**. The **evaluation apprehension theory** proposes that performance will be enhanced or impaired only in the presence of others who are in a position to evaluate that performance. His experience put him in the position to look at me as a fellow guitarist and evaluate me on a different level than someone who had never picked one up before,

although he didn't (he complemented me and showed me some cool stuff). He wasn't evaluating me or looking at my playing under a microscope. Whether or not I would have felt a shift in my playing if I knew he never played before would be interesting to find out.

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EXAMPLE ENTRY #3

On Sunday morning I witnessed two social psychology concepts in action: **nonverbal behavior** and the **false-consensus effect**. It was noon when I heard my father call my name from the spare bedroom in our house, and even before I knew he was in a mood. When I met him, he proceeded to point at a window with the blinds fixed closed, and then went off blaming my friend Brian for breaking the blinds, because Brian had slept in that room the night before, and to him that was the obvious and rational conclusion. My first impression was that he had no idea what he was doing. I walked over to the window, pulled the blinds outward, and watched as they returned to their proper upright position, and walked away resenting my father's immediate decision to blame a friend of mine for something totally imagined.

My immediate recognition of my father's emotional state was due to the **nonverbal behavior** he was emitting, which is described in social psychology as behavior that reveals a person's feelings through facial expressions, body language, and vocal cues. His frustration and anger were as clear as day. I could feel his emotional state before I even saw him. Everything he could have communicated about how he felt in the moment was communicated without his intending to do so.

My father's thinking was a perfect example of a social psychology concept called **the false-consensus effect**, which is a tendency for people to overestimate the extent to which others share their opinions, attributes, and behaviors. He believed that I was had the same negative beliefs about Brian that he did, because he conversed in a way that displayed his assumption that we both agreed he was the culprit: he said "look what Brian did" instead of asking "how come this is stuck like this?" The irony of this example is that it wasn't only my father who made a misjudgment in the situation. Afterward I had written about it, I was upset with my father for

acting like he did, and I had come to the conclusion that he behaved as he did because he was close minded and pessimistic person—why else would he place blame on a person for such a small thing?

My thinking was an example of the **actor-observer effect** in social psychology, which is a tendency to attribute our own behavior to situational causes and the behavior of others to personal factors. I had concluded that my father was angry and moody because that was who he was, rather than considering that maybe the situation had contributed to his mood; maybe he had a terrible night the night before the apparent problem with the window set him off.

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EXAMPLE ENTRY #4

I play baseball for Ventura College, and I am a pretty experienced with baseball as I have played since I was 4 years old. My example has to do with the batting cages (a facility to hit baseballs from machines), as I am a person who practices hitting at the batting cages quite frequently. Every time I go to the batting cages I hit in the 80 mph (miles per hour), which is the fattest and/or most difficult cage to hit baseballs. I experience social facilitation almost every time I attend the cages and I feel I perform much differently when I am in the presence of others there. Social facilitation is the process whereby the presence of others enhances performance on easy tasks but impairs performance on difficult tasks. I feel most of the time when I hit that I do much better when people are around me than if I am not around others, regardless if they are watching me or not, since hitting a baseball at that speed is easy for me. I feel that this social facilitation is produced by the mere presence theory. The mere presence theory is the proposition that the mere presence of others is sufficient to produce social facilitation effects. So I feel that the mere presence theory and that social facilitation are interconnected in a way and they both apply to my performance at the batting cages.

I sometimes feel a sense of the evaluation apprehension theory at the cages during other times. The evaluation apprehension theory states that the presence of others will produce social facilitation effects only when those others are seen as potential evaluators. Since I go there all the time, I sometimes do not even care that most individuals are around me or even watching me, since I feel they are not worthy of evaluating me. However the owner of the batting cages is actually a Major League Baseball player, and the manager of the cages plays baseball at my rival college, Oxnard College. So every time that the owner or the manager are present at the batting

cages and I am hitting, I feel as though they are watching and/or evaluating me which produces the social facilitation effect on me as well. It always seems that I do better when those two are around, more than anybody else being around.

I just feel really comfortable hitting a baseball, and I guess since I do better with others around me, social facilitation must be playing a role when I hit at the batting cages.

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EXAMPLE ENTRY #5

When considering attributions as they relate to the topic of academic performance, it is rather simple to explain my behavior through the attribution theory. The attribution theory is a group of theories that describe how people explain the causes of behavior. I am a person who greatly values my grades, and when I get a bad grade I always seem to internalize and externalize my behavior through personal attribution and situational attribution. Personal attribution is an attribution to internal characteristics of an actor, such as ability, personality, mood, or effort. While situational attribution is an attribution to factors external to an actor, such as the task, other people, or luck.

Just yesterday I happened to get a low score on one of my quizzes in my class, in which I instantly obtained a bad mood and I remember thinking to myself, "You are such a failure XX, you should have studied more." Therefore I was displaying the personal attribution effect by putting the blame on myself. I remember being on the phone later into the night with my girlfriend, and I told her, "The questions I missed were stupid anyways, they made no sense, and my professor always makes the quizzes more difficult than they should be." Therefore I was displaying the situational attribution by putting the blame on factors not attributed to myself, but towards my professor and the quiz itself. I always seem to blame myself first when it comes to getting bad grades, and then I build up inner hostility thereby pointing my finger at outside factors that have really no correlation to my low scores. I always think about these situational attributions usually the next day or a couple days after, and realize that I have made an incorrect attribution concerning my actions, and the I am the one to blame (personal attribution) not something/ someone else.

EXAMPLE ENTRY #6

I also notice others behavior concerning these attributions. My friend James is a great example of both personal attribution, and situational attribution. James plays baseball with me for Ventura College, and he is a pitcher. It seems like every time James has a good day pitching, he displays personal attribution, and it seems like every time he has a bad outing on the mound, he displays situational attribution. For example, when James pitches for an inning or two and does not give up any runs, I will talk to him afterwards and he will say, "I was just really feeling comfortable on the mound today, my pitches were breaking a lot, and no one could hit me." However recently I hit a grand-slam (a home-run with the bases loaded, scores 4 runs) off of him, and when I confronted him afterwards about it he said, "The wind was blowing kind of hard today, and Buster (a coach) made the call for me to throw that pitch, not me." James does this all of the time, and since he mostly has bad outings, you will always hear him blaming other factors or people for his poor performance.

There are actually a lot of people out there that are like James who attribute other factors or people for their negative outcomes, and these same people attribute personal factors towards positive outcomes.