

expressions of affect (e.g., facial expressions, eye contact, touch, and paralanguage), but also through behaviors from which inferences about the discloser may be drawn (e.g., not returning a suitor's telephone calls). Although such factors undoubtedly play important roles in moderating the meaning of verbal self-disclosure, this often subtle interplay has received relatively sparse empirical or theoretical attention. These processes are likely to be important as the field moves away from unifacted models that conceive of relationship intimacy as a singular function of self-disclosure depth, and instead construes self-disclosure as one of several factors that contribute to establishing, maintaining, enhancing, and diminishing intimacy.

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SELF-EFFICACY. Perceived self-efficacy is people's beliefs in their capabilities to perform in ways that give them control over events that affect their lives. Efficacy beliefs form the foundation of human agency. Unless people believe that they can produce results by their actions, they have little incentive to act.

Sources of Self-Efficacy

There are four major ways of developing a strong sense of efficacy. The most effective is through mastery experiences. Successes build a belief in one's efficacy. Failures undermine it. If people have only easy successes, then they are easily discouraged by failure. Development of a resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort.

The second way of creating and strengthening beliefs of personal efficacy is through social modeling. If people see others like themselves succeed by sustained effort, then they come to believe that they, too, have the capacity to do so. Observing the failures of others instills doubts about one's own ability to master similar activities. Competent models also build efficacy by conveying knowledge and skills for managing environmental demands.

Social persuasion is the third way of strengthening people's beliefs in their efficacy. If people are persuaded that they have what it takes to succeed, they then exert more effort than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise. But effective social persuaders do more than convey faith in people's capabilities. They arrange things for others in ways that bring success and avoid placing them prematurely in situations where they are likely to fail.

People also rely on their physical and emotional states to judge their capabilities. They read their tension, anxiety, and depression as signs of personal deficiency. In activities that require strength and stamina, they interpret fatigue and pain as indicators of low physical efficacy.

Diverse Effects of Self-Efficacy

Beliefs of personal efficacy regulate human functioning through four major types of process: cognitive, motivational, emotional, and choice. Much human behavior is regulated by forethought. People of high efficacy set challenges for themselves and visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides for performance. Those who doubt their efficacy visualize failure scenarios that undermine performances by dwelling on things that can go wrong. A major function of thought is to enable people to predict events and to exercise control over them. People of high efficacy show greater cognitive resourcefulness, strategic flexibility, and effectiveness in managing their environment.

Efficacy beliefs play a central role in the self-regulation of motivation. Most human motivation is generated cognitively by goal aspirations and the material, social, and self-evaluative costs and benefits anticipated for difficult courses of action. People of high perceived efficacy set motivating goals for themselves, they expect their efforts to produce favorable results,

they view obstacles as surmountable, and they figure out ways to overcome them.

People's beliefs in their coping efficacy also affect how much stress, anxiety, and depression they experience in threatening or taxing situations. Those who believe they can manage threats and adversities view them as less inimical and act in ways that reduce their aversiveness or change them for the better. People have to live with a psychic environment that is largely of their own making. Many human distresses result from failures of control over perturbing thoughts. Beliefs of coping efficacy facilitate the exercise of control over perturbing and dejecting rumination.

People are partly the products of their environments. By choosing their environments, they can have a hand in what they become. Beliefs of personal efficacy can, therefore, play a key role in shaping the courses lives take by influencing the types of activities and environments people choose. In self-development through choice processes, destinies are shaped by selection of environments known to cultivate valued potentialities and lifestyles.

People with a low sense of efficacy avoid difficult tasks that they view as threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to their goals. They turn inward on their self-doubts instead of thinking about how to perform successfully. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on obstacles, the consequences of failure, and their personal deficiencies. Failure makes them lose faith in themselves because they take it as evidence of their inherent incapability. They slacken or give up in the face of difficulty, recover slowly from setbacks, and easily fall victim to stress and depression.

People with high perceived self-efficacy, by contrast, approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. They develop interest in what they do, set high goals, and sustain strong commitments. They concentrate on the task, not on themselves. They attribute their failures to remediable lack of knowledge or skill, or insufficient effort. They redouble their effort in the face of obstacles and soon recover their self-assurance after a setback. This outlook sustains motivation, reduces stress, and lowers vulnerability to depression.

Everyday reality is strewn with difficulties—full of impediments, adversities, setbacks, frustrations, and inequities. People must have a robust sense of personal efficacy to sustain the perseverant effort needed to succeed. In pursuits strewn with impediments, realists either forsake difficult pursuits, abort their efforts prematurely when difficulties arise, or become cynical about the prospects of effecting change. An optimistic sense of efficacy is an adaptive bias that promotes accomplishments and emotional well-being; it is not a cognitive failing.

Collective Efficacy

People do not live as isolates. They work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own. People's shared beliefs in their collective efficacy to produce desired outcomes is a crucial ingredient of group agency. Such beliefs influence the type of futures people seek to achieve through collective action, how well they use their resources, how much effort they put into their group endeavor, their staying power when collective efforts fail to produce quick results or meet forcible opposition, and their vulnerability to the discouragement that can beset those taking on tough problems that are not easily controllable.

Some people live in individualistically oriented cultures, others in more collectivistically oriented ones. If people are to work together successfully, the members have to perform their particular roles well. A strong sense of efficacy is, therefore, vital for successful functioning regardless of whether it is achieved individually or by people working in concert.

[See also Personality.]

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SELF-ESTEEM. Evaluation is the most fundamental response we have to objects and events in the world around us. When that evaluative response concerns ourselves it is known as self-esteem. Self-esteem is a global evaluation reflecting our view of our accomplishments and capabilities, our values, our bodies, others' responses to us, and even, on occasion, our possessions. Low or negative self-esteem is often aversive and is correlated with depression. Positive self-esteem is thought to be important to psychological adjustment.

Mechanisms for Maintaining Self-Esteem

Contemporary research has uncovered so many different mechanisms that appear to affect self-esteem that they have been collectively referred to as the self zoo (Tesser, Martin, & Cornell, 1996). We can touch on only