

A World of Influence



*Social Influence Processes and Settings ♦ Tales from the Influence Hall of Fame
(and Shame) ♦ ABCs of Influence: Attitudes, Behavior and Cognitions ♦ A Social
Psychological Perspective ♦ A Look Ahead*

When you woke up this morning, your mind was probably filled with thoughts and plans about the upcoming day. First you have to do this, then that, and later (don't forget) something else. Perhaps you want to have lunch with a friend, but to do so would require ducking out of a class or slipping away from work early. It's your decision. Perhaps you also have to decide how to spend your evening. You don't have to work, and so you could finally go see that movie all your friends are raving about. Or you could drop by the party you were invited to. It's your decision. But, first things first. What's for breakfast? Cereal and juice may sound better than toast and coffee, and if you're concerned about cholesterol and calories, maybe you think you've already had your weekly quota of bacon and eggs. It's up to you.

If you think about it, there are so many things that are really up to you. What to wear, what to watch on television, who to vote for, what to major in, where to live, who to marry—the choices are endless. For most people in countries like the United States, life is a supermarket of options, just waiting for us to select them; people have a lot of control over how they live their lives. Indeed, we become more aware of the lifelong freedoms we have enjoyed—and perhaps have taken too much for granted—when our television screens suddenly explode, as they did in 1989, with the life-and-death struggle of Chinese college students to gain basic freedoms from their authoritarian government. But we also marvel at the profound human need for freedom and democracy when we witness the sudden transformations taking place throughout eastern Europe as the tyranny of oppressive Communist control is overthrown by the people.

No doubt about the considerable degree of personal control we have over our own lives. Yet, with so many people having so much freedom, how do we

manage to stay out of each other's way most of the time, as we pursue our individual goals and dreams? How is it that, in the face of countless options, so many people share so many similarities? And how is it that, to further some of your own goals, you often have to get others to do what you want them to—usually without resorting to obvious forces like law, money, physical power, or privilege? And how do others constrain your choices, shape your likes and dislikes, and direct your actions?

Haven't you, like us, at times complied with suggestions or demands from authorities that went against the grain, were not in line with your personal values? And surely you have belonged to groups that exerted pressure on you to dress or act in ways that only later you realize were not "the real you." Did you ever buy an advertised product you didn't really need because of the persuasive appeal of the ad?

These are questions of social influence—the changes in people caused by what others do. We certainly are free to make many decisions, but immersed as all of us are in a social world, we cannot escape the subtle or strong inputs from others that may tip our decisional scales in favor of one option over another. Indeed, we often do not want to escape the influence of others who are wise, just, and concerned about our well-being. To be part of the human condition is to be engaged in the give-and-take of social interaction, to be enmeshed in the fabric of the social context that gives meaning to our lives. And, of course, there is the flip side, that part of ourselves which functions as the influence agent, attempting to influence others—to be our friends, to study or go to the movies with us, to give us a job, to share our views, and even our lives.

Social influence is pervasive. It goes on everywhere, all the time. It's the way of the world. In order to function most effectively in this world, it pays to know how and when to use social influence, to be able to recognize social influence attempts directed at you, and to have a well-tuned sense of whether to accept or reject particular influence attempts. This book is all about the psychology of social influence. It will give you practical advice on how to resist unwanted sources of influence and how to be more effective in your personal quests as an influence agent. But the foundation of those ideas comes from the vast amount of research on persuasion and compliance conducted by researchers in the areas of social and political psychology and in communications. We will examine the empirical research and theories coming out of academic settings and go beyond them to integrate points of view and information that come to us from influence professionals, those who make a living by being good at their craft, be it in marketing, advertising, selling, polling, lobbying, fund-raising, and even recruiting for the military or for cults.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE PROCESSES AND SETTINGS

A social influence process involves behavior by one person that has the effect—or even just the intention—of changing the way another person behaves, feels, or thinks about a stimulus. The stimulus might be a political issue (for example, abortion), a product (such as diet soft drinks), or an activity (for instance, cheating on exams). Thus, you might try to talk an uncertain friend into agreeing with your position on abortion. You may encourage another friend to try a new soft drink you like. And when someone who looks up to you confesses to feeling tempted to cheat, your own record of honesty in test taking may serve as a model to help the friend resist the temptation. In all three cases, you have served as an agent of possible social influence.

In each instance, you changed or attempted to change some target person's behaviors, feelings, or thoughts about an issue, object, or action. In other cases, the stimulus can be yourself: the influence agent. For example, through charming behavior and a winning smile, you might try to get a new acquaintance to like you. In still other cases, the stimulus can be your target, as when you give a depressed friend a pep talk that encourages the friend to think more highly of himself or herself. Counselors and psychotherapists are professional influence agents whose goal is often to change the target's self-image. Finally, you may be both target and agent of influence when you decide to put into practice specific strategies of change designed to transform those New Year's resolutions into the reality of losing weight, making new friends, getting work done on time, and so forth.

There are many techniques of social influence, but they all tap into a relatively few basic influence processes that hinge on the ways in which human beings think, remember, feel, and make decisions. Before focusing on *what* to do and *how* best to achieve your influence objectives, it is essential to focus on *why* it works—understanding the psychology of influence.

That is precisely what we attempt to do in this book. Our general academic goal is to provide a foundation of information about the nature of social influence in its various forms. At the practical level, we expect that this knowledge will prove valuable in your everyday life by making you a more successful agent of social influence and a wiser citizen schooled in detecting and resisting unwanted types of influence and obedience to unjust authority.

But first, we will set the stage with some specific and dramatic examples of social influence occurring in three quite different kinds of settings: interpersonal, persuasion, and mass media. One way in which these influence settings differ is in how personal or *individualized* they are, while a second way is in the *size, or scope, of the target audience* at whom the influence is directed.

The most individualized influence situations are interpersonal settings, in which the number of people immediately involved is small and there is one-to-one communication between influence agent and target. The efforts of your two best friends to convince you to go to the movies with them is an instance of an interpersonal influence attempt. So is a mother's efforts to get her busy teenage son to clean up his room, and a car salesperson's pitch to get you to buy a specific car.

Persuasion settings are also common. Here a communicator, typically a speech maker, attempts to sway an audience to agree with him or to take some action he endorses. Persuasion involves one influence agent attempting to influence simultaneously many target people in the audience. Evangelical ministers offer us a prototype of the persuasive pulpit communicator influencing attitudes and changing behaviors. Persuasion settings are more impersonal than interpersonal settings. Nevertheless, some communicators are marvelously effective at moving an audience, so powerful and passionate in delivering their message that we label them as *charismatic*.

Influence also takes place in *mass media settings*. Messages and images conveyed over TV, radio, and printed publications reach millions of people around the globe. By nature, they are highly impersonal; not only are they designed to be meaningful to many individuals, but they are also communicated *through* a medium. The communicator is neither physically present nor often explicitly identifiable as a single person or entity. Yet influence through the mass media can be potent. The tens of billions spent on commercial advertising each year attest to the effectiveness of the media in promoting a seemingly endless array of products and in packaging political candidates.

To introduce you to the three major types of settings in which influence takes place, let's look at some current and historical examples of each of these forms of social influence in action. For interpersonal influence, we will examine the techniques used by Moonie recruiters to get young people, like you, to join their cult. For communication and persuasion, we will review the sources of power of charismatic communicators such as the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Ronald Reagan, Adolph Hitler, and the Peoples Temple cult leader Jim Jones. For mass media influence, our focus will be on the strategies and tactics currently being used by cigarette companies to get people to start smoking and already addicted smokers to resist encouragement to stop smoking. These examples, and the theoretical overview that will follow them, illustrate themes and principles that we will elaborate upon in subsequent chapters. The examples also provide some solid real-world substance to what can mistakenly seem to some students like nothing more than an abstract academic exercise.

TALES FROM THE INFLUENCE HALL OF FAME (AND SHAME)

Interpersonal Influence: Conversion and the Personal Touch

You've probably heard about the Moonies, religious cult extraordinaire of the 1970s. *Moonie* is the popular name for members of the Unification Church of Korean Reverend Sun Myung Moon, a very wealthy businessman who calls himself the new messiah. The Moonies became one of the foremost nontraditional religious movements that actively recruited young people on college campuses and in urban centers—obtaining dramatic conversions by the thousands. Keep reading and you will discover that the Moonies are alive and well in the 1990s, probably recruiting on your campus and in local high schools—but in a new disguise, and perhaps more effective than ever.

The typical Moonie recruitment effort unfolds as follows. A church member approaches a potential recruit on the street and hands him a leaflet. The recruiter might explain that she represents an "international student organization for young people concerned about the future of the world." They chat for a while, and apparently impressed with the young man's sensitivity, she invites the potential recruit to a free, or inexpensive, dinner being given that night. "Who is giving the dinner?" he might ask. And the answer she might give is "CARP, the Colleague Association for Research on Principle." The name has a good ring to it, and it's hard to object to any of those terms, singly or in combination. The bright-eyed and clean-cut young woman gushes over how much fun and how meaningful these dinners are and suggests that "If you're not doing anything special tonight, why not join us?"

Should he take her up on the offer, the would-be recruit finds himself in a pleasantly decorated "visitors' center" and in the company of ten to twenty other young people, a half-dozen of whom might be guests like himself—the rest, well-trained influence agents. The meal is delicious, and the environment filled with gaiety and "unconditional acceptance." That means open demonstrations of affection and respect for the guest and anything he has to say, well almost anything, as he will soon see. The old members—in the majority—defly guide conversation, describing the worldwide good deeds of the organization and its beliefs regarding the many woes of modern life. Although the world's social, economic, and political problems are complex, there are simple solutions.

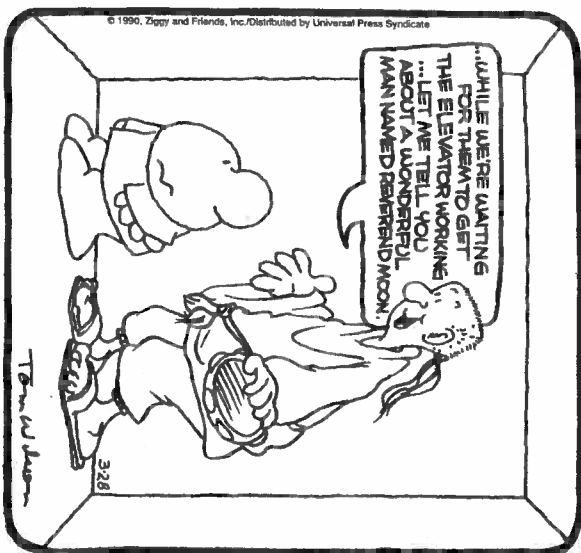
After dinner, the dishes are cleared and out come the folk guitars. Festive singing and dancing go on for an hour or so, before a lecture and slide show is given by a smiling and articulate senior member. The new recruit is asked whether he would like to be happier, and whether

the source of any aimlessness and discontent he may feel could be the result of living in a misguided and unhappy society. When he says what they want to hear, they are all smiles and hang on to his every word, negatives and uncertainties elicit frowns, loss of eye contact, and a cloud over paradise. At some point he may learn that he is among followers of a religious movement, but that is played down—for now. The slide show proceeds at a rapid pace, showing lovely scenes of happy people in the beautiful mountain farm village operated by the Unification Church. When it's over, the new recruits are invited to come and spend the weekend, or even a whole week at the village. "We have a van leaving tonight!" People are touching, holding hands, being embraced. Do you want more of that good stuff, or do you want to end it and return to your solitary, unappreciated, and isolated existence? That is the question running through the minds of the happy targets.

If our recruit signs on for the weekend, as some of the other guests seem to be doing, he is engaged in gentle conversation about his religious beliefs while en route to the village. The next two days follow a rigid and totally filled schedule that runs from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. After being awakened by a band of singing campers, the newcomers share in morning exercises and prayers, then breakfast, then song practice, then two lectures expounding the principles and beliefs of the Unification Church, and then lunch. After lunch, it's sports, more songs, another lecture, dinner, and evening discussion groups. Everything is upbeat. It's a return to summer camp at its best, except there is no chance for an intimate encounter; this is serious fun. Regular members, seen in the midst of their work-a-day lives, seem so content. Yet the recruit hears lectures and discussions on heavy topics—the Bible, Jesus Christ, the meaning of life. The constant pitch is for love, trust, and morality; the theme is that society has gone awry—because of the evils of Communism, lust, greed, and other assorted ills—and that following Reverend Moon's philosophy can set it all straight.

The recruits are never left by themselves. At least one member, often an attractive person of the opposite sex, accompanies them everywhere. Discussion and meal groups always have a ratio of at least one member per recruit. The perceptive observer would note that the ever-present members carefully manage communication—outlining the church's beliefs, discouraging statements and ideas that don't bear on their themes, stopping smiling when a guest shows signs of negativity, and beaming with those potent love bombs at positivity. Together, members help one another to create the appearance of agreement and wisdom. And yet the recruit is made to feel very special—liked, a "member of the family," part of something big and important, privy to profound information. As the weekend draws to a close, he receives the invitation to stay the week or longer, to "learn more about us" and gain new insights "we didn't have time to get into."

ZIGGY



A Hare Krishna using a Moonie line—on a captive audience. (Ziggy copyright 1990 Ziggy & Friends. Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.)

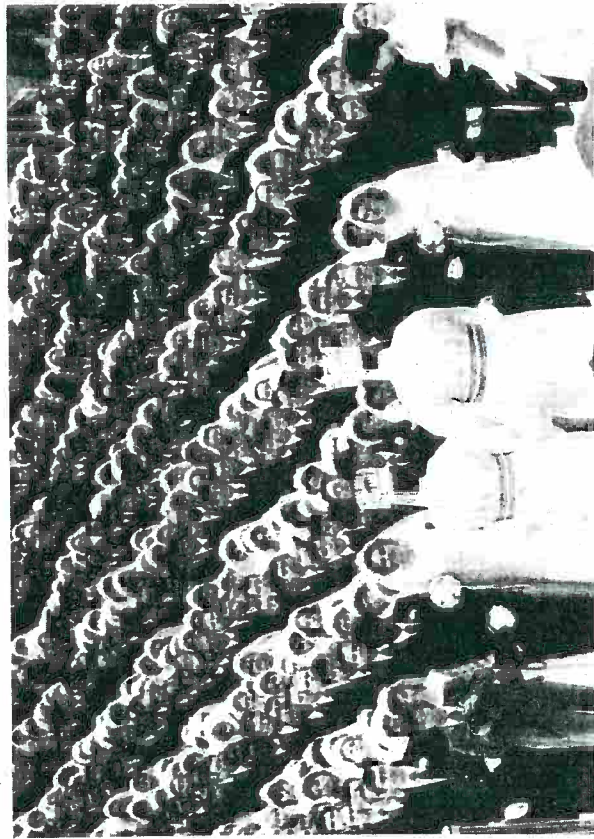
You can see how "up close and personal" the whole experience is. The potential recruit is face-to-face with influence agents for hours and days, whose mission is to change his beliefs and behavior—to get him to join their organization, to be part of the cult. It seems as if you were being invited and encouraged to come into heaven itself and to leave behind the hell of your previous existence. It sounds like a great deal, right? How could you go wrong?

The chances are about 1 in 3 that, having spent the weekend, our recruit will take his Moonie hosts up on the offer to stay longer, and about 1 in 10 that he will ultimately seek to join the cult as a full-fledged member (Galanter, 1989). Do these statistics impress you? Thirty and ten percent may not seem like a lot, but any advertiser or door-to-door salesperson would gladly accept these rates of compliance because over time and with lots of attempts, they translate into many successful "hits." And make no mistake; this is major league social influence. The typical pattern of those who do convert has been to quit school, give all their money and possessions to the cause, reject their family and closest friends, and devote themselves entirely to the goals of conquering evil and spreading goodwill—mostly through begging and hustling for new members. Converted members even are willing to let Reverend Moon decide whom they should marry. In 1982, he performed a mass wed-

ding of 2,100 couples at Madison Square Garden—all of whom he personally paired and many of whom had never met before.

Conversion to Unificationist beliefs tends to be rather thorough. Indeed, in the 1970s, cults became viewed as a menace to society. They were accused of "brainwashing." Many colleges included, as part of freshman orientation, workshops on how to resist cult recruiters. Some parents attempted to "kidnap" back their converted adolescents, sometimes hiring strong-arms to forcibly remove them from the cult community. A new service emerged known as "deprogramming," and many families purchased it, for as much as \$20,000 for one series of these intense counterinfluence encounters (without any guarantee of success). The recaptured recruit would be put in the "care" of a "deprogrammer," who would attempt to undo whatever social influence had led to the conversion, often using techniques very similar to those used by the Moonies to "retrofit" the convert and gain the reconversion. Court decisions against this kidnapping-deprogramming have curtailed its use in recent times (*San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle*, 2/12/90).

Back to the future. Although they draw less popular attention today, the Moonies and literally thousands of other cults are still with us.



The Rev. Sun Myung Moon marries over four thousand Moonies en masse at Madison Square Garden on July 1, 1982. All of these young people accepted the person whom the Rev. Moon personally picked to be their spouse—in some cases a total stranger until this very wedding day. (UPI/Bettmann)

In fact, a great deal of our recruitment description was drawn from a feature article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that ran in August 1989 and was written by a reporter who was "recruited" in the summer of 1989 (Nix, 1989). The Moonies never left; they just switched to a quieter style and kept up with the times. Although their indoctrination techniques remain similar, they are couched in rhetoric tuned to the more conservative outlook of today's youth and cloaked in an aura of mainstream respectability. Moonies call themselves "Unificationists" now. Their youth branches and urban centers long ago switched from hippie-sounding names like the "Creative Community Project" to the mainstream-sounding "Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles." Who can carp about that? More extreme aspects of their indoctrination programs have been eliminated, largely for legal reasons. For example, the deceptive practice of not revealing who they are until after the recruit is at the church retreat—called "heavenly deception"—and the extreme daily regimen of weeklong retreats that sometimes resulted in sleep and food deprivation have been modified. Unification Church politics are now openly conservative. The organization gives millions to conservative political causes, engages in political lobbying in the Congress, and owns (since 1982) the ultraconservative daily newspaper the *Washington Times*.

But recruitment continues as always. Upwards of 10,000 disciples in the United States are engaged in the classic style of recruiting new members. Another 40,000 to 50,000 Unificationists live mainstream lives in neighborhoods across the country, and their numbers are swelling in Korea and other countries.

Extremely normal social influence. What makes Moonie recruitment methods as effective as they are? It isn't mass hypnosis or brainwashing. Moonies do not walk around like zombies. And it isn't physical force. Contrary to some popular myths, there are no barbed wire fences or armed guards surrounding Moonie farms and retreats. Nor is there a spellbinding charismatic orator who lures the youth away to this alternate lifestyle; most recruits are never in direct contact with Reverend Moon, and he is not a particularly strong communicator. The social influence techniques that lead to this relatively rapid religious conversion can be understood in terms of normal psychological processes. The conversions seem dramatic and "abnormal" for two reasons. First, most of the young people who enter the indoctrination process feel somewhat alienated and lonely, or anxious about their uncertain future. Indeed, Moonie recruiters deliberately target for approach individuals who look forlorn or without purpose, especially foreign students or those traveling on vacation. Hence, potential recruits are especially susceptible to all the attention and "love bombing," and to the message that there is a better path for them through a life in the Moon organization. Second, the sheer quantity and diversity of ordinary influence

techniques that recruiters apply make for extreme effects. Usually, in any given situation, we get hit with just one influence tactic. Moonie recruiters fire away with their entire arsenal of influence weapons on each and every potential recruit.

In subsequent chapters we will explore at length the psychology of these influence tactics. Perhaps you recognized some as you read about this typical recruitment effort. Among them are (1) building an initially small commitment into progressively bigger commitments that the recruit must justify to himself or herself (come to dinner, come for the weekend, stay the week, give us your money), (2) repeated persuasive arguments that offer straightforward solutions to vexing personal problems, (3) the power of groups dynamics, both the numbers and personal attractiveness of all those agreeing and agreeable members, (4) the denial of the opportunity to counterargue by keeping the recruit busily occupied with information and activities (and never alone), (5) positive reinforcements (smiles and good food and that special brand of attention that makes one feel individuated), and more.

The concerted application of multiple interpersonal influence techniques is by no means restricted to religious cults. Similarities may be drawn between how cults recruit and retain members and how Alcoholics Anonymous chapters convert many confirmed alcoholics to sobriety and keep them that way (Galanter, 1989). All kinds of commitment rituals and group-to-individual persuasion to a strict dogma and new lifestyle occur in this highly successful self-help group. Similarly, closely knit athletic teams do a lot of interpersonal influence among themselves. On the downside, indoctrination into terrorist groups often resembles the Moonie system. An extremist group of Iranian terrorist recruiters have a lot of raw material to work with in a 14-year-old youngster raised in a strict Shiite Islamic tradition in which martyrdom is seen as a direct path to God.

It's influence, but is it legal? Religious cults in general, and the Moonies in particular, recently returned to the news in a dramatic way in 1988—as the objects of a California Supreme Court decision concerning the lawsuit of former Moonies David Molko and Tracy Leal. These individuals were separately recruited and indoctrinated in basically the classic fashion we have outlined here. They spent months as willing and involved recruits at a Moonie farm in northern California, and eventually became formal Church members. Both traveled to different camps and villages for specialized lectures and training. Both returned to urban areas to raise money for the Church by selling flowers on the streets.

Molko, a 27-year-old recent law school graduate, spent 6 months with the Moonies, gave 6,000 dollars of his own money to Church leaders, and took a law bar-review course and the law bar examination with

the sponsorship and financial support of the Church. Leal, a 19-year-old college student, spent 4 months as a Moonie. While on Church assignments, Molko and Leal were abducted by deprogrammers hired by their parents. Both were persuaded through the deprogramming experience to give up their membership. In turn, they decided to sue the Unification Church for using fraud and brainwashing to get them to join the church, for inflicting emotional distress, and for falsely imprisoning them.

The trial court threw out these lawsuits on the grounds that they were unconstitutional. The First Amendment forbids interference with the free expression of religious preferences and ideas. And the Unification Church, as a bona fide religion, was expressing its religious ideas and, like other religions, seeking converts. A court of appeals agreed with this judgment. In October 1988, however, the California Supreme Court reversed this decision. It ruled that Molko and Leal have a right to sue for fraud and infliction of emotional distress, but not for false imprisonment. It acknowledged that the Church may have rendered Molko and Leal "incapable of deciding not to join the Church, by subjecting them, without their knowledge or consent, to an intense program of coercive persuasion or mind control" (*Molko/Leal v. Holy Spirit Association*, 1988; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/18/88).

This ruling has vast ramifications. What constitutes "coercion"? What is "mind control"? And it raises basic questions for psychologists as well as for all citizens of a democracy: When are our choices guided by our free will, and when are they determined by overwhelming situational forces? Think about this case for a moment. It is true that, during both Molko's and Leal's recruitment, their Moonie hosts practiced their heavenly deception and failed to reveal their identity as members of the Unification Church, despite queries from the recruits. But both were told after several days with whom they were hanging out. And both then stayed on for months, and openly admitted in court that they had been informed they were free to leave if they wished. There is no evidence, or claim, that physical force was ever applied to either former member. Both Molko and Leal recount how, early on, they struggled with decisions of whether or not to stay, and then decided themselves to stay longer. They recount the social pressure they faced and, in doing so, acknowledge that they were aware of the pressure at the time. Since they saw it coming, were they not free to resist it? Paradoxically, in the end, they had to be forcibly separated from the "captors."

Statistics can be revealing, sometimes. You will recall that 10 percent or fewer Moonie recruits stay on as members for any length of time. Further studies show that a sizable number of recruits who make up this 10 percent were leaning toward Moonie-like ideas and lifestyles to begin with (Barker, 1984). It is hard to conclude from this that Molko and Leal faced some magically overwhelming coercion unique to their

indoctrination experience that made virtually anyone vulnerable to its power. Many traditional churches sided with the Unification Church on this issue, fearing an erosion of religious freedom. Some "friends of the court" filed legal briefs contending that there is no such thing as "coercive persuasion" unless the target person is physically confined or in a life-threatening setting.

Although we will not take sides at this point on the coercion issue, we can say with certainty that the Unification Church does use a number of interpersonal influence techniques, in coordinated fashion, to gain conversions. These techniques are known to be effective, especially when carefully programmed into coordinated scripts that can induce extreme changes in some people some of the time. But the Moonie tactics are not "exotic" or peculiar to this group; they are used in thousands of influence settings that few would consider coercive or even a little bit "mind controlling." From high-pressure sales to concerted efforts to get people not to drive after drinking, to say no to drugs, and to have safe sex, *effective* social influence tactics are deliberately and liberally applied every day to virtually every one of us.

The real issues concern (1) the point at which "typical and usual" psychological pressure becomes extraordinary and unfair, or too forceful for the average person to resist, and (2) whether an individual can be said to have lost his or her freedom to resist or to flee in a situation in which physical restraint is totally absent. But then again, isn't it the subjective interpretation of the situation, how someone construes it, that guides behavior, making a "hell of heaven or a heaven of hell"? As you read about social influence processes, these issues will be well worth pondering. For now, the Molko/Leal ruling highlights the potential power and complexities of social influence, which we will attempt to explain and unravel in this book.

Communication and Persuasion: "Say It Again, Sam"

It takes less "person power" to influence many with a powerful speech than to influence people one by one. Interpersonal influence is not very efficient because it is so labor intensive. But effectively influencing large numbers of people with the careful use of words, through what is often called *rhetoric*, is a skill that few master. Those who do can be world movers in positive or, unfortunately, negative ways. Let us look at a few masters of persuasion, including a pair the world admires and a pair it has come to despise.

The words shall make us free: Martin Luther King, Jr. His speeches still ring in the ears of millions. "I've been to the mountaintop . . . and seen the promised land." "We shall overcome." "I



A communicator who made deep connections with multiple audiences: the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., delivers his famous "I have a dream" speech in 1963. (UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

have a dream." "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last." It is an understatement to say that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a great orator. Dr. King was the essential leader of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. His leadership and contributions took many forms. He wrote books, led marches, organized peaceful protests and boycotts, suffered at the hands of bigots, and went to jail for his beliefs. But it was his rhetorical skill, his ability to strike a deep emotional chord in large audiences of people both black and white, poor and middle class—to *move people to action* by the power of his words alone—that did more than anything else to create a social revolution in American race relations. His speeches convinced masses of people to engage in nonviolence or civil disobedience, to face guns, dogs, and nightsticks without weapons. Like Gandhi, the architect of nonviolent resistance against the British in India, King proved that the word was indeed mightier than the sword.

What was it about Martin Luther King's speech-making skills that made him so uniquely effective as a communicator? He was, of course, a fluid and dynamic speaker, a trained and practiced preacher who made the roller-coaster cadence and emotional appeals of the church pulpit work at the convention center podium as well. King was adept at

sending the right nonverbal "vibes" to his audience. His facial expressions and ringing tones of voice—of anger, compassion, joy—closely matched the words he was saying. Watching or listening to him, you never got a feeling of insincerity or disinterest. Quite the contrary, here was a man totally dedicated to an ideal, impassioned with a vision of how society could change for the better. King also seemed to read his audience well. The well-timed pause to let something sink into a suddenly awestruck crowd, the rising climactic tone of voice carrying the crowd to a rising crescendo of vocal approval—these were trademarks of his oratory. Like other great orators, he kept his message simple and direct, and repeated key phrases that the audience could soon anticipate and join in the refrain. The importance of nonverbal signals (voice tone, facial expressions, and the like) will receive careful scrutiny later in the book.

The content of King's speeches was also crucial to the powerful and lasting influence of his speeches. The man was a shrewd and gifted speaker. King knew that his live audiences pretty much already agreed with his positions and shared his goals. He put this to use by using "we" and "our" when expressing his hopes and beliefs, and by using key phrases, in-group allusions that made these people feel that they were privileged members of an important movement—insiders on the threshold of a dream. This helped turn mere agreement into willing action. It also brought out the cheers, which became infectious and probably moved many a fence sitter to openly vocal approval; it gave him the "home court advantage."

Out there in TV and radio land, there was a much larger audience, not as unanimously or as fervently tuned in to King's cause—the silent masses. King's real brilliance as a persuader may well be how he brought the masses to sympathy and support for civil rights for African Americans. In his speeches and sermons, King emphasized *what they had in common with him and the movement*: their Christianity and their citizenship in the United States—a nation synonymous with belief in personal freedom. King continually reminded his audiences that freedom and liberty are Judeo-Christian and American ideals, that the push for racial equality is no less noble and righteous a pursuit than the admired struggles of the Israelites, the early Christians, and the Pilgrims. His speeches are laced with biblical passages, as well as paraphrases of memorable statements by famous black preachers and popular political figures like John F. Kennedy. These familiar, often borrowed, themes resonated with large segments of the population. It was an exquisite use of the rhetorical strategy of associating one's new ideas with other, positively valued, familiar ones (Bettinhaus, 1980). In short, King employed audience-approved language to make his message appear consistent with religious, cultural, and patriotic values (K. D. Miller, 1986). Two major determinants of successful persuasion, so well practiced by

King, are (1) establishing perceived similarity of the speaker to the audience and (2) creating positive associations in people's minds. We will discuss these features later in more detail.

Getting one's message understood in the first place is even more fundamental. And King was adept at ensuring message comprehension. Rhetoricians have observed that, although he himself was highly educated and articulate, King's rhetoric usually blended everyday language and what is called a "biblical vernacular" (Marbury, 1989). He spoke in common terms and deftly mixed in the biblical quotes and themes that would communicate clearly to his large religious following. He made his points easy to follow, repeated them, and encouraged the audience—his following—to serve as the chorus, restating and endorsing what they were hearing—a technique referred to as "call and response." They heard the message, believed, were changed, and moved to action.

The Great Communicator: Ronald Reagan. Former President Ronald Reagan's speeches were also easy to follow, and this helps account for his fame as "The Great Communicator." Reagan sent the simple message that if we just behave like good old Americans and get back to the basics, everything will be all right. The optimism theme, according



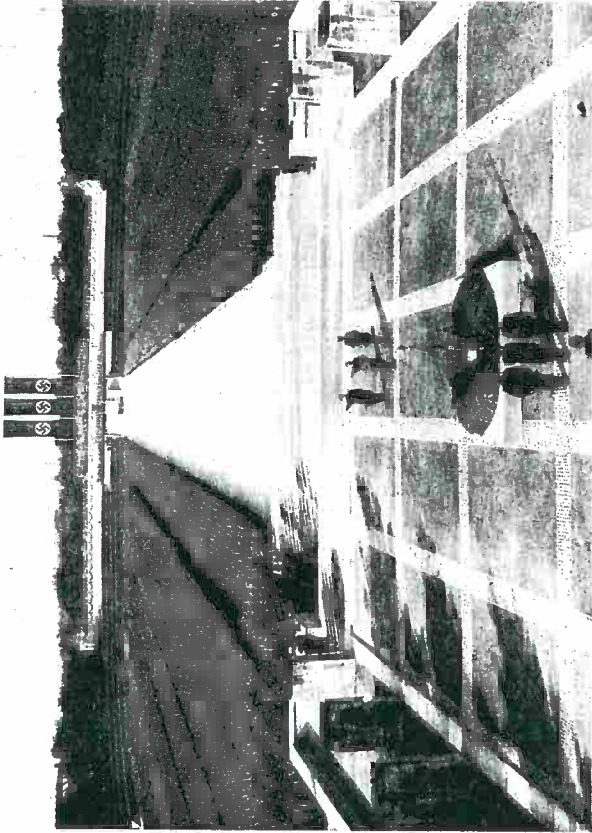
A straightforward message and a look of sincerity helped former President Reagan the "Great Communicator." (UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

to a number of recent psychological studies, plays well with people (Zullow et al., 1988). But it was the way Reagan delivered this message that really made him and his policies so popular. His face beams sincerity and a slightly befuddled look that seems to say, "I don't know why people make this seem so complicated; anyone with common sense realizes that...." In the 1980s, there were a lot of voters out there who felt that *they* had the common sense and were glad to have a leader on their wavelength (instead of lost in abstract intellectual clouds). The steady, soothing voice of Mr. Reagan didn't hurt either. Also, Reagan had a quality that seems to typify many charismatic communicators (Baron and Byrne, 1981). He was highly sensitive to social trends and changes. In his time, it was the middle-American backlash against big government, liberalism, and the "unpatriotic" sentiment of the Vietnam era. He masterfully weaved a "get back your pride, values, and patriotism" theme into his public addresses. It was low-key and unprofound—but effective.

To all this must be added Reagan's training as a professional actor, which made him especially at ease when talking into the same TV lens that rattled so many of his political opponents, like Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. When he looked into the camera, he saw Nancy's smiling face that he could talk to. His political opponents, on the other hand, seemed to be looking into a black hole, like their glove compartment.

And so in Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ronald Reagan we have two highly influential mass communicators. They are strikingly different in the emotional force of their speeches, with King being the fiery preacher, and Reagan the soft-spoken soother. But beneath this difference in delivery style, we see major similarities in the optimism of their messages, their visible sincerity, the sense they exude of identification and similarity with the audience, and the elegant clarity of their message. History shows over and over that, mixed together in the right proportion, these components are powerful people movers.

The rhetoric of ruination: Adolph Hitler. On the down side, the power of persuasion can have a truly devastating influence. Consider Hitler. This little man was not nearly as bright or as physically impressive as Martin Luther King, Jr. And to say the least, his dreams and deeds prove him to have been King's opposite in terms of humanity and goodness. But Adolph Hitler resembled King in one way. He moved audiences—enormous audiences. He was an emotional speaker who used the rise and fall of his voice to maximal effect. He connected with German sentiments of the time—wounded patriotic pride, the resentments and frustrations over the humiliating penalties imposed on the nation after World War I. And like other formidable persuaders, Hitler followed an adage that today seems to be a sacred maxim of political speech making: keep it simple. In Hitler's own words:



Hitler magnified the emotional pitch of his messages by surrounding himself with awesome spectacles. (UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos)

The receptive ability of the masses is very limited, their understanding small; on the other hand, they have a great power of forgetting. This being so, all effective propaganda must be confined to a very few points which must be brought out in the form of slogans until the very last man is enabled to comprehend what is meant by any slogan. If this principle is sacrificed by the desire to be many-sided, it will dissipate the effectual working of the propaganda, for the people will be unable to digest or retain the material that is offered them. (Hitler, 1933, p. 77)

To his rhetorical devices, Hitler added his coup de grace, a special element of innovation of his part. This was the grand staging, the surrounding of himself with awesome spectacles. You've seen newsreels as well as re-creations in countless movies about Nazi Germany. The thousands of goose-stepping soldiers, the huge red banners hanging above the majestically raised stage on which this little man stood, the eerie spotlights, the Wagner operatic marches. It all elicited spine-chilling emotions and conveyed a great sense of power and historical significance to the German citizens lost as individuals in those enormous rallies. All that emotion and power became attached to Hitler and his ultimately catastrophic ideas. Qualter (1962) describes the spectacle making in his treatise *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare*.

Uniforms, bands, flags, symbols were all part of the German propaganda machine, designed by Hitler and Goebbels to increase the impact of strong words by evidence of strong deeds. Meetings were not just occasions for people to make speeches, they were carefully planned theatrical productions in which settings, lighting, background music, and the timing of entrances and exits were devised to maximize the emotional fervor of an audience already brought to fever pitch by an hour or more given over to singing and the shouting of slogans. (p. 112)

Interestingly, even today Hitler's speeches in the context of grand spectacle have the power to hold people's attention—even among American students with no knowledge of German! And so beyond the words of powerful communicators is the message of their personal power that gets transmitted to the audience.

Fatal persuasion: Jim Jones. Hitler convinced the nation he led to make brutal war which tore the world asunder and caused death and destruction everywhere his message went. More recently, another charismatic leader, a Christian minister, insignificant to world history compared to Hitler, convinced those in his church to do the unthinkable—to poison their own children, commit suicide, and murder their fellows who refused. The mass suicide claimed 913 lives, including more than 200 children. These mind-boggling numbers are unprecedented in the modern history of suicide.

This modern tragedy occurred not long ago, in November 1978 in a remote commune in Guyana, South America. The commune was called Jonestown, and it had been established in 1974 by a preacher and self-proclaimed prophet named Jim Jones. Seeking seclusion and a supportive socialist government, Jones had moved his People's Temple religious cult there from San Francisco. When a U.S. congressman and an entourage of reporters and cult members' concerned relatives visited Jonestown to check out reports that converts were being abused, Jones, already suffering paranoid delusions and ill from jungle disease and drugs, panicked. He envisioned a forcible invasion of the village and a loss of the near total control he had over the thousand people in his "flock" (Galanter, 1989). We'll never know, but in his warped mind, he may have genuinely feared the cold-blooded murder of those people. After entertaining and satisfactorily countering any concerns of the visiting delegation, Jones was nearly successful in disguising the nightmare he had created for his followers in that remote jungle outpost. But when a small group of Temple members asked to return to the United States with Congressman Ryan, Jones' composure became unglued. He dispatched a hit squad to intercept and murder the congressman and his group as they were about to depart Guyana by plane. While this was happening, Jones called his congregation together and, in a masterful speech, first created fears of what the U.S. military would do to

them once the murders were known, and then described the glories of "revolutionary suicide," stepping over to the other side where peace and justice would be found. Finally, he ordered the mass suicide to begin. Once his order was obeyed, Jones either shot himself or had an assistant do so.

Imagine for a moment this unimaginable event: the Reverend Jim Jones cajoling and preaching his final sermon and hundreds of people stepping forward to a tub filled with cyanide-laced Kool-Aid, being handed a cupful, and drinking it, with adults voluntarily forcing their children to drink first. It took time for the line to move, for the nearly thousand people to each get their deadly dose. And in that time, people still waiting watched the violent spasms of death of those who preceded them. They could see the contortions and hear the screams—especially of the children, who resisted the bitter-tasting potion and seemed to realize its consequences. Still, people moved forward to the tub of poison in their turn. According to the few who lived to tell of this nightmare, physical coercion in the form of injections of cyanide by Jones' strongmen was applied to some reluctant members. But the great majority of people willingly took their own lives, without having seen external coercion applied. As the line moved along, church members offered moving testimonials to their great leader, to the man they called "Dad," to their "Father, who cares." And then they died for him. How could this happen?

Because Jones had a vision of his place in history, he tape-recorded hundreds of hours of his talks and meetings. That last hour of Jonestown was taped from beginning to bitter end. The surviving tape is chilling. It becomes clear to listeners that the mass suicide could never have occurred without the persuasive pitch Jim Jones delivered as the disaster unfolded. One hears his constant voice, alternately soothing, congratulating, and "clarifying" as needed. One senses how Jones "played the crowd" to perfection. Jones, of course, already had a large hold on his followers. In the language of influence psychology, Jim Jones was a credible, trusted, and expert source. Disaffected with the mainstream culture to begin with, his followers were easily converted to his philosophy—a blend of socialist and biblical ideals. Isolated from contact with nonindoctrinated outsiders, the Jonestown community, by 1978, had totally accepted the world view of Jim Jones. According to this view, "Dad" was a literal reincarnation of Jesus, Buddha, and Lenin, and should rightfully dictate all aspects of one's life (Galanter, 1989). As with the Moonies, the psychological environment of each People's Temple member was carefully controlled—only here the ideas were more extreme and the isolation, thus the control of the total situation, was greater.

But how do you "sell" mass suicide? Jones first used his credibility. As he announced the plan, he reminded the audience how he had

never let them down, how he had given them peace and happiness, how he loved them and had tried to give them "the good life." He encouraged others to speak up, but selectively called upon those whom he could count on to eloquently endorse this sentiment. And sure enough, we hear people taking the microphone and thanking "Dad."

The suicidal speech had what communication theorists call a problem-solution organization (Bettinghaus, 1980). Jones first identified the problem. He told the faithful that the congressman was going to be killed by an angered cult member acting on his own (actually Jones had ordered the assassination). As a result, American soldiers would be sent to invade Jonestown and would "butcher" them all, starting with the children and elders. There was no other solution but to commit a mass suicide to prevent this act of vengeance. This picture of things he then worked to great effect. It now became a matter of protecting weaker members of the group. "Be kind to children, be kind to seniors," Jones exhorts. It was now also a matter of controlling one's destiny, rather than having it controlled from without. "It was said by the greatest of prophets, from time immemorial, no man takes my life from me, I lay my life down." Then later, "...we are not committing suicide—it's a revolutionary act." The ringing applause to each of these assertions indicates that Jones' redefinition of the act was both accepted and inspiring. He created a new, shared view of reality, the reality of madness—but he sold his lethal idea as he might make a public health recommendation to exercise more to improve cardiac functioning.

The problem-solution framework also served to intensify a we-they mentality, which had been ingrained in the thinking of all members of the People's Temple. Jones offered a vivid picture of the suffering the American enemies would inflict, stirring passionate emotional acceptance of the need to prevent it. Rational thought declines in an atmosphere of emotional upheaval, and Jones made sure of the upheaval.

Masterfully, Jones destroyed dissent by first inviting it. When a vocal young woman made reasonable arguments for alternative solutions short of suicide, Jones conveyed an air of support and fair-mindedness. "I like you Christina. I've always liked you," he told her. But he refuted her arguments with platitudes that stirred the crowd and ultimately compelled his most committed followers to come forth and publicly question her faith and allegiance. In the end, she was shouted down—and with her defeat, Jones won and the people lost.

As the universal approval for this prophet's visionary "final solution" began carrying people up to the Kool-Aid crucible, Jones began to express displeasure with those who still hesitated. He alternated between a soothing tone ("Go with your child—I think it's humane...it is painless") and the impatient tone of a disappointed parent ("Lay down your life with dignity...stop these hysterics").

In the final analysis, Jim Jones's charismatic speech played a ma-

making the ultimate sacrifice. He won credibility with his impressive rhetoric, and used that credibility and rhetoric to influence his followers out of their lives. History gives us few more powerful instances of mass compliance to a communicator. It is vital that we all learn the basic lessons of Jonestown—under the heading of the power of social influence—to prevent a recurrence of such human tragedy. That is one of our goals in writing this book for you.

It is hard to find a better, or worse, example of influence by persuasive communication that was literally a matter of life and death. But as we move to our third and final class of influence settings, the mass media, we will discover that life and death, at least in the long term, may hinge on our reactions to socially sanctioned influence attempts we encounter every day.

Mass Media Influence: Where There's Smoke, There's Fire (and Advertising)

Imagine this. You're at a meeting of managers in a pleasant seminar room of the government office building where you work. There are ten other people present, and six of them have smoked at least one cigarette since the meeting began half an hour ago. At the moment, four people are puffing away, almost in unison. To you, a nonsmoker, it's getting to be a bit much. Normally, cigarette smoke doesn't bother you very much. There are always smokers around, and you usually don't even notice the odor. But this room is small, and the air circulation is poor. Yes, you are uncomfortable with the growing smell and throat irritation. The idea of asking these chimneys not to smoke, however, doesn't even enter your mind. You're in the minority. You're a deviant. And who wants to start a hassle, anyway?

This seems like a strange scenario. Indeed, today it is hard for college students to imagine a time when a majority of adults smoked and when nonsmokers were obliged to keep their mouths (and nostrils!) shut or else risk social rejection. Yet the vignette of the smoke-filled room would be an accurate description of most managerial meetings until quite recently. Smoking was the "in" thing to do; it was fashionable, sexy, and mature. If you don't believe us, rent videos of some old movies—favorites like *Casablanca*, for instance—and count the smoking scenes.

To be sure, since Christopher Columbus brought tobacco leaves from the New World back to Spain, there have been those who vocally opposed the habit. In 1604, King James I of England launched an antismoking campaign. More than two centuries later, cigar smoking flourished in England, over the outspoken criticism of Queen Victoria. From the gay 1890s to the roaring 1920s, antismoking organizations

rettes—first mass-produced in the 1860s. Cigarette smoking, these organizations claimed, was bad for your health. Several states outlawed it, and debates over smoking were common in major newspapers and magazines.

But the early antismoking movements never really caught on with the public. In fact, they were roundly defeated in the realm of public opinion. From the 1930s through the early 1960s smoking, particularly cigarette smoking, enjoyed unprecedented popularity in the Western world. Smoking was part of the good life, or so we were told and shown in every segment of the mass media.

From desirable to deviant: smoking loses its cool. It all began to change after the Surgeon General's Report linking smoking and lung cancer appeared in 1964. In the 1950s, about half of all Americans over the age of 18 smoked. A majority of men smoked. By the late 1960s, the overall figure had declined to 42 percent; by the late 1970s, to 35 percent; and by 1985, to 31 percent (Shopland and Brown, 1987). In adult company, nowadays, smoking typically is socially frowned upon. It is prohibited in most indoor public places and on domestic airline flights. And lighting up can bring stares of outrage and even dirty words from zealous advocates of the right to breath fresh air. In two decades, the change has been dramatic. Smokers are now the deviant minority.

This dramatic change illustrates the power of the social influence that can be delivered through the impersonal but ever-present mass media. Unlike earlier antismoking campaigns, the one that began in the 1960s was waged over the television and radio airwaves, as well as in magazine and newspaper ads and public service announcements. Americans repeatedly watched and listened to well-produced messages warning of the health hazards of cigarettes. Moreover, the campaign had the official and highly visible backing of the federal government and the medical profession—highly credible sources for many people. Whereas medical opinion was sharply divided during earlier eras, this time there was total consensus (Troyer and Markle, 1983). The evidence of health risks had simply become too strong to debate.

Against this backdrop of support and legitimacy, the mass media blitz of antismoking messages had a large influence. The hows and whys of media message influences on the human mind will be investigated in depth in Chapters 4, 5, and 9. You can intuit, however, that repeated messages that have the "right stuff" (to be defined later) can shape our images, fears, and attractions. The constant arousal of fear of lung cancer and heart disease proved a strong motivator to quit smoking or not to start. It also eventually made it possible for antismoking groups to attach a label of "deviant" to smokers and make the label stick (Troyer and Markle, 1983). While the American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association tell us "Smoking is bad for you, so don't

have sent the message about the dangers of passive exposure to cigarette smokers: "Smoking is bad for people around smokers, so don't let them do it." If you remember the 1980s, you know that this latter message was heard, believed, and responsible for a significant curtailment of smokers' rights and a tarnishing of their image.

So why are many people still smoking? The decline of smoking, and the role of the mass media in that decline, has been impressive. About 1.5 million Americans quit smoking each year. There may be, however, an even more impressive display of media social influence power in the smoking issue: despite the general decline, cigarette smoking has survived—and the stock market value of cigarette companies has flourished. About 1.25 million Americans *start* smoking each year, newcomers and also old-timers who lost their battle to abstain.

Let us put some things into perspective. With everything in their favor, you would think that the antismoking movement by now would be an irresistible force that has all but eradicated cigarette smoking from our land. It's not as if the movement has its facts wrong. Cigarettes kill, main, and immobilize. In 1984, the U.S. Public Health Service estimated that cigarette smoking causes 350,000 premature deaths per year in the United States; in 1990, that estimate rose to 390,000 annual deaths caused by smoking, according to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan. Other estimates go as high as 485,000 (Ravensholt, 1985). Smoking is the number one cause of preventable deaths in our nation and the only major risk factor that is actively promoted. The amount of cigarette smoking in the United States is the highest in the world, with an average of 3,500 cigarettes smoked each year per adult American. Those who smoke a pack a day spend about 7,000 dollars in 10 years to support that lethal habit. Smoking-related diseases account for over fifty billion dollars in health care and insurance costs, and over forty billion dollars in lost productivity (Davis, 1987; Sullivan report to Congress, 1990). After years of mounting evidence of the dangers of smoking, you would think smoking would now be nearly a thing of the past.

Think again! Tens of millions of Americans continue to smoke, as do people worldwide. About 31 percent of the American population smokes, even though more than 90 percent are aware of the serious health risks (Shopland and Brown, 1987). Of course, you say. It's tough to kick the physical and psychological addiction. Aren't most current smokers longtime users who cannot quit? If only that were true. As it is, thousands *join* the ranks of smokers each day. Many are teenagers being recruited into the army of smokers. One out of every five teens takes up smoking on a daily basis. In the 1980s, there was *no* change in this figure. What has changed is that more and more of the teenagers who do smoke are *female*. For the first time in history, more female than

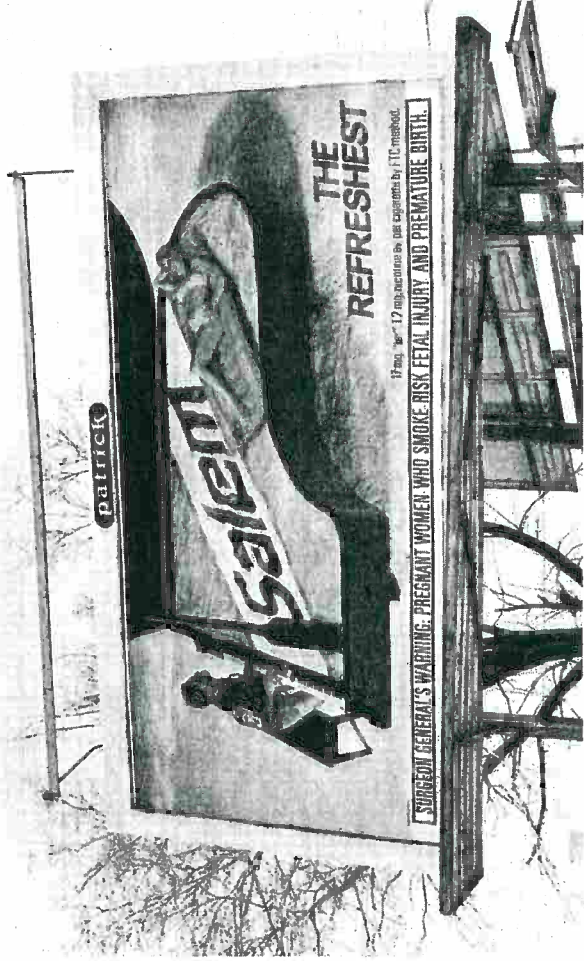
male adolescents and is holding steady among females in general, even as it declines among men. Soon, in the overall adolescent *and* adult population, female smokers will outnumber male smokers.

This persistence of a deadly habit may be the true mass media influence miracle of our time—a deadly miracle created by a rich and powerful tobacco industry that is able to bankroll the most skillful and creative advertising and marketing programs money can buy. In 1984, cigarette manufacturers spent 2.1 billion dollars on advertising and promotion—seven times as much as they spent just 10 years earlier (Davis, 1987). By 1989, that figure had expanded to 3 billion dollars a year, double the amount spent on the next leading advertised products: pharmaceuticals and alcohol (Blum, 1989). We're talking big money here, spent by smart people who know how to create *images* that transform reality and guide Americans into suicidal actions—as surely as Jim Jones did on a much more modest scale.

Images of health, fitness, and freedom. Cigarette advertisers began to counter the health warnings by pushing low tar and nicotine cigarettes. Word play (“doublespeak”), as we will see many times in this book, is part and parcel of many social influence strategies. “Less hazardous to health” can very easily be reworded in such a way as to imply (if not say outright) that it is “more healthful” or at least “safe” to smoke this “light” cigarette. A famous ad for Vantage cigarettes had a healthy and handsome man saying that “I hear the things being said against high-tar smoking...and so I started looking for a low-tar smoke.” Apparently, nothing can be said against low-tar smokes. That is not so, of course, for they too cause cancer.

Recently, the “low tar and nicotine” pitch has softened (Altman et al., 1987). The ads simply encourage associations between any old brand and the new American values of leading active, healthful lifestyles. Newsports are “Alive with pleasure.” Judging by the ads, cigarettes go hand in hand with many desirable recreational pursuits. See those people at the ballpark just above the caption “Winston’s Winning Taste.” Marlboro Menthol has “Spirited Refreshment” for horseback riders. Skiers can discover Alpine’s “Peak Refreshment.” How can all these healthy looking folks doing such active things be risking their health by smoking?

Women receive special pitches from the cigarette sellers—and their own brands. “You’ve come a long way baby” was the slogan with which Virginia Slims was introduced. It was a way of linking smoking with the women’s movement—with independence from men and the rules designed by men. It was a successful campaign—designed by men, of course. A flood of women’s cigarettes followed Virginia Slims: Eve, Silva Thins, Salem Slim Lights, Satin, Ritz—and now, Superslims.



Lethal images: Cigarette advertisers attempt to link smoking with fun, sports, music, sex, romance, glamour, and freedom for “people who like to smoke.” (Both: Annie Hunter/The Image Works)

They are all distinctive in some way: thinner, stain filter tips, designer logos. The images are clear. Smoking makes you look slim, trim, chic, and fashionable.

Sexiness, of course, is another provocative theme that sells. Scenes that include scantily clad women and romantic backdrops were the second most common, behind recreational ones, in cigarette ads in the 1970s and 1980s (Altman et al., 1987).

Promotions and market savvy. Efforts to encourage smoking go beyond the creation of image-projecting ads. Advertisers are very careful where they put their ads. Magazines that youth read (such as *Rolling Stone*) get the recreation-vitality ads. Magazines that adult women read (like *Cosmopolitan*) have the romantic and "be slim and trim and independent" ads. Billboard advertising of cigarettes mostly occurs in blue-collar and ethnic neighborhoods, whose residents smoke in greater numbers. It all seems so calculated. And it is—to make lots of money.

Since the 1960s, there has been a huge increase in the sponsorship of major sporting and cultural events by tobacco companies. The Virginia Slims Women's Professional Tennis Tour was the first to co-opt the concern of raising the prizes and publicity for women's sports by identifying this cigarette with that goal. Why, you might ask, is there a Kool Achiever Award given annually to people involved in inner-city community development? And what about sponsoring of Hispanic street fairs, outdoor jazz festivals, and other worthwhile events that are plastered with the sponsoring company's cigarette logo. Don't we owe it to them to smoke a little if they have given so much to our community? Sponsorship of such events gets brand and corporate names well-exposed in a positive light, much like the Mafia bosses who give big donations to little churches.

With a little help from reporters and celebrities. Cigarette companies get help in their image making from other mass media transmissions. Have you ever noticed all the smoking that goes on in music videos? What does it project to the millions of idolizing teenagers when Madonna and her two sidekicks give out an award on the MTV Music Video Awards show, all the while blatantly smoking? How about Mikhail Baryshnikov incessantly smoking (and dancing) his way through the movie *White Nights*? How much help is it when reporters and commentators speculate about drugs and AIDS as contributors to celebrity deaths, and yet few mentioned baseball commissioner Bart Giamatti's "three pack a day" habit when he died of a massive heart attack at age 51? Even as antismoking messages continue to be transmitted, other mass media messages make it clear to many that smoking has some desirable benefits, that many important people do it, and that compared to the real problems of society (drugs, unsafe sex, and the like) cigarette

smoking is a small vice. An obvious reason for the collusion of the mass media and the tobacco industry is the enormous amount of money involved in print ads in magazines and newspapers, as well as the political lobbies in Congress that make it clear how much the federal, state, and local governments make from cigarette taxes. They need that revenue and are prepared to resist attempts to get people to stop smoking.

The media sets the stage. We have used the smoking issue to illustrate social influence via the mass media, supporting the notion that people's behavior and thinking can be influenced by information transmitted very impersonally. Of course, there are other influences on smoking, including peer pressure to smoke (especially among adolescents), the addictive quality of nicotine once smoking is done regularly, and the physical enjoyment smoking provides by associating it with desirable activities. But note that the favorable smoking images created on Madison Avenue and in Hollywood have much to do with making smokers who, in turn, become the pressuring peers or self-professed addicts.

The tobacco industry fumes back some more. The Tobacco Institute continues to create ways to keep its business flourishing. Instead of "low tar and nicotine" (ugly words), it's now "low smoke." A recent full-page newspaper ad from Superslims Virginia Slims proclaims: "*The skinny on low smoke.* Kiss that fat smoke goodbye, and say hello to the first low smoke cigarette for women..." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/20/90). They also have embarked on a campaign to discredit the opposition by labeling them as a "coalition of antismoking zealots," as neo-prohibitionists who want to control the lives of freedom-loving Americans. The tobacco industry has recast the issue not in terms of health risks but as a constitutional crisis: smoking is a symbol of free choice that Americans value above all else, and the antismoking agents are trying to deprive smokers of that basic right (Blum, 1989). For a summary of the multilevels on which the new ads for cigarettes operate, see Table 1.1.

The target of these ads has also changed, away from white middle-class males—who have defected in the largest numbers—to women, to adolescents, to homosexuals, to blue-collar workers, and to black and Hispanic consumers. Let's briefly examine a recent campaign targeted at "vile females" before ending this section with a look at what some critics are calling the "genocide of smoking."

An advertising agency recently designed a detailed marketing strategy for RJ Reynolds Tobacco company that "targets young, poorly educated white women whom the company calls 'vile females,'" according to a story in *The Washington Post* (2/17/90). The competition has become intense for the allegiance of the "lucrative market" of 18- to 24-year-old women because their smoking rate is escalating while that of

TABLE 1.1 FUNCTIONS OF CIGARETTE ADVERTISEMENTS

1. Recruits new smokers from "vulnerable groups"
2. Sustains smoking loyalty of committed smokers (resists pressures from antismokers to quit)
3. Tempts former smokers to restart habit
4. Entices smokers to switch to new brands, with new features (only about 10 percent do per year)
5. Creates an illusion of social acceptability of smoking and smokers through association with positive values and the "good life"
6. Fosters complacency of nonsmokers regarding health dangers and societal threats by viewing so many positive images of smokers
7. Buys immunity from critical attack from legislators, journalists, and business interests

SOURCE: Based on data from Alan Blum, 1989.

most other groups is declining. The new Dakota cigarette marketing is aimed at the virile female with no education beyond high school, who wants to get married early, works but has no career, goes cruising and partying, attends hot rod shows and tractor pulls with boyfriends, and likes all-male rock groups. At press time, a possibility under consideration was to form the company's own rock group, aptly named, of course, Dakota.

The genocide of smoking. Systematic attempts to increase smoking rates among American black and Hispanic consumers have been termed "genocide" in a 1981 pamphlet of the American Cancer Society and by critics who cite the insidious attack on the health of minority communities by the tobacco industry (Blum, 1989). Let's look at the statistics of what smoking is doing to the black community, review briefly the various ways that smoking is supported and resistance is stifled by the tobacco industry, and end with an example of an ad campaign targeted for inner-city black consumers for a new product: Uptown cigarettes.

The cancer death rates for black Americans are increasing much faster than those for white Americans, by as much as 20 to 100 times more, according to cancer mortality statistics published by the National Cancer Institute in 1990. Over the past 30 years the cancer death rate for black males has jumped from 189 per 100,000 a year to 250 per 100,000, while for white males the increase is slight, from 174 to 188 per 100,000 white men. The 44 percent higher cancer death rate for black males is matched by a 14 percent higher rate for black women compared with white women. These and other racial differences in cancer-related statistics are explainable by lifestyle factors as well as diet and alcohol use, but differences in increased rates of smoking contribute directly to put-

ting black consumers at risk from cancers of the lung, throat, mouth, and larynx. And so why do they smoke, and why are they smoking more than ever and dying at these alarming rates?

One set of answers has to do with the power of the media campaigns to make smoking attractive to black consumers, by ads designed to appeal to what ad agencies have determined are their basic values. Added to this form of social influence is the secondary factor of the revenues that these ads bring to the black community in various forms. Magazines that cater to black readers—such as *Ebony*, *Jet*, and *Essence*—carry a large number of color ads for cigarettes. Billboards and posters on public transportation, gas stations, laundromats, movies, and other sites are another source of revenue for many people in the community. It is estimated that 80 to 90 percent of all advertising in minority neighborhoods is for cigarettes. As noted earlier, donations of prizes and the underwriting of community events has been one strategy used by tobacco companies to co-opt potential sources of opposition. And so it is no wonder that the president of a black ad agency worries that "if they kill off cigarette and alcohol advertising, black papers may as well stop printing," while the publisher of a black consumer-marketing publication moans that "everybody will lose big" (*Newsweek*, 2/5/90, p. 46).

The effects of being dependent on these enormous revenues show up in the failure of most publications that reach black audiences to ever report on the smoking-cancer link and to fail to cover public conferences that address the issue of cancer among minorities. This failure to inform their audience results in a lack of recognition of the parasitic nature of smoking, as seen in the results of a 1986 survey of 1,000 Chicago residents which found that 89 percent of the black respondents and 86 percent of the Hispanic respondents did *not* identify cigarette smoking among nine listed cancer-risk factors (Dolecek et al., 1986).

As with the "Dakota" campaign and women, tobacco companies have used "market segmentation" strategies to identify groups of black people who can be reached with specialized advertising and sales campaigns pitched to their needs, values, and self-images. A promotional blitz was recently designed for urban black citizens in Philadelphia to sell a new cigarette, Uptown, with slick ads suggesting glamour, high fashion, and night life. "Uptown. The place. The taste."

Vocal community and national opposition to this targeting strategy forced RJ Reynolds to retreat reluctantly. The community won that battle, but the odds makers are out on who will win the war on cigarette smoking. But, given the tax money and profits involved, don't bet against the tobacco interests. It may be extreme to refer to this influence situation as "genocide," but minority people are being targeted to engage in behavior now known to kill them in large numbers, and the targeting is likely to continue, and the debate likely to rage on, in the United States and throughout the world.



Pitching cigarettes with ads designed especially for urban minorities identified with market segmentation methods. (Annie Hunter/The Image Works)

The smoking issue is a persuasion battleground between anti and pro forces (Troyer and Markle, 1983). It illustrates how social influence tactics and processes at a national level affect us all, whether or not we as individuals smoke. We all pay for the health care of those who do smoke and get ill and die from it. We pay through insurance costs, the drain on medical and research resources, and the grief of personal loss. On the other side of the coin, questions of personal freedoms and precedent-setting restrictions on our freedoms hang in the balance of the controversy. If smoking should be restricted, what else might be? Thus, the smoking example, as well as the earlier examples of persuasion and conversion, illustrates that social influence, although studied by academics, is far more than an academic topic. It is part of the fabric of our lives—and in some cases of our deaths.

ABCs OF INFLUENCE: ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR, AND COGNITIONS

Ultimately, the goal of an influence agent is to change the target's behavior. Cult recruiters want the targets of their recruitment efforts to live, work, and pray in the sect's isolated community. They want recruits to give their money and time to the religious cause. Dr. King

sought to move black and white people to nonviolent demonstration and to vote, and he sought to move people in general to more tolerant treatment of members of other races. With the billions they spend on advertising and marketing, cigarette makers seek to get people to start or to keep smoking their brands. Behavioral change is the ideal name of the influence game.

But has an influence attempt totally failed if the target's behavior does not change? Not by a long shot. The influence effort may have succeeded in changing the target's beliefs or attitudes. Consider a Unification Church recruit who goes for a weekend visit to one of the Church's rural retreats. He doesn't stay past Monday and doesn't join the movement. Yet, after listening to the members' descriptions of how they live and what they hope to accomplish, and observing the day-to-day activities of the communal village, let us say that he is compelled to abandon his image of the Moonies as fanatical, dangerous, and un-American. His new belief is that the movement offers a legitimate alternative lifestyle that may be what some people need. Imagine further that he actually came away with a favorable impression of that lifestyle and a measure of liking for the members he met.

These last changes would indicate that our "near recruit" has acquired a more positive attitude toward the Unification Church. In essence, an attitude is an evaluative disposition toward some object. It's an evaluation of something or someone along a continuum of like-to-dislike or favorable-to-unfavorable. Attitudes are what we like and dislike, our affinities and aversions, the way we evaluate our relationship to our environment. An attitude is a disposition in the sense that it is a learned tendency to think about some object, person, or issue in a particular way.

What does attitude or belief change buy the influence agent? Potentially a lot, because these internal changes often set the stage for later behavior changes. The newly positive attitude about the Moonies may make the person that much more receptive to future pro-Moonie messages, or more likely to consider joining when frustrations mount in his life in the "mainstream," or more likely to talk in favor of the group in ways that encourage others to join.

An even better example may be those relentless cigarette ads. Any given ad—or even a hundred of them—may not cause a 15-year-old girl to take up smoking. But the repeated association of cigarette smoking with fun and glamour and sexy, exciting people like Madonna may create a positive attitude toward smoking (perhaps not of how it tastes, but of how it looks to smoke). Plus, the healthy looking people in those ads, and the advertising emphasis on modern "low smoke" cigarettes, may nurture the belief that smoking isn't that unhealthy. Now imagine this girl facing tenth-grade-style peer pressure to try smoking. Is she just as likely to resist the pressure now that she has these media-induced atti-

Attitude

Attitude change
Behavior

tudes and beliefs than she would if she never acquired them? It's doubtful. And so a change in beliefs or attitudes may not have a direct effect on changing behavior, but may "set up" the person to be more vulnerable to subsequent sources of social influence.

Attitude Systems

These examples illustrate five categories of our reactions to social objects. There is behavior itself: we vote, buy a product, sign a petition, donate blood. Secondly, there are behavioral intentions, expectations, or plans to act in specific ways prior to doing so; like New Year's resolutions, these plans are sometimes never acted upon. Then there are the ideas that inform our actions, our beliefs, or (more broadly) our cognitions, which include both beliefs and pieces of knowledge about the object and how one "should" behave toward it. Fourth, there are affective responses, emotions, or "gut feelings" that reflect one's attitude at the level of physical arousal (sensations of pleasure, sadness, and so on). And, finally, there is the attitude itself, the overall, summary evaluation that includes the other components. In this light, we can define an attitude more broadly as an evaluative disposition that is based upon cognitions, affective reactions, behavioral intentions, and past behaviors, and that, as we will see, can itself influence cognitions, affective responses, and future intentions and behavior (Zanna and Rempel, 1988).

This definition implies that the components are not independent or isolated in different corners of the mind. To the contrary, they can be highly interrelated. Cognitions and attitude cohere into what we might call a mental representation of the object. Affective responses and overt behavior may result when the object comes to mind, and they may contribute new information back to the representation of the object. Hence, the attitude, behaviors, cognitions, and emotions regarding an object or issue constitute a system of responses that characterize the individual. Because the attitude is the overall summary of the system ("I like it"), let's call it an attitude system. An example of an attitude system appears in Figure 1.1.

A closer look at mental representations is in order. Let's take something concrete, for example, cameras. You can conjure up an image of the typical camera. Pondering it, you draw up pieces of knowledge (how cameras work, how much they cost) and various beliefs (using good cameras requires complex understanding of light and shadows) about cameras. The image also includes your camera-using inclinations and behavioral experience with cameras (you bring cameras on vacations and have one ready on Christmas morning). Undoubtedly, as you think about cameras, you will realize that you have at least a mild atti-

An Attitude System

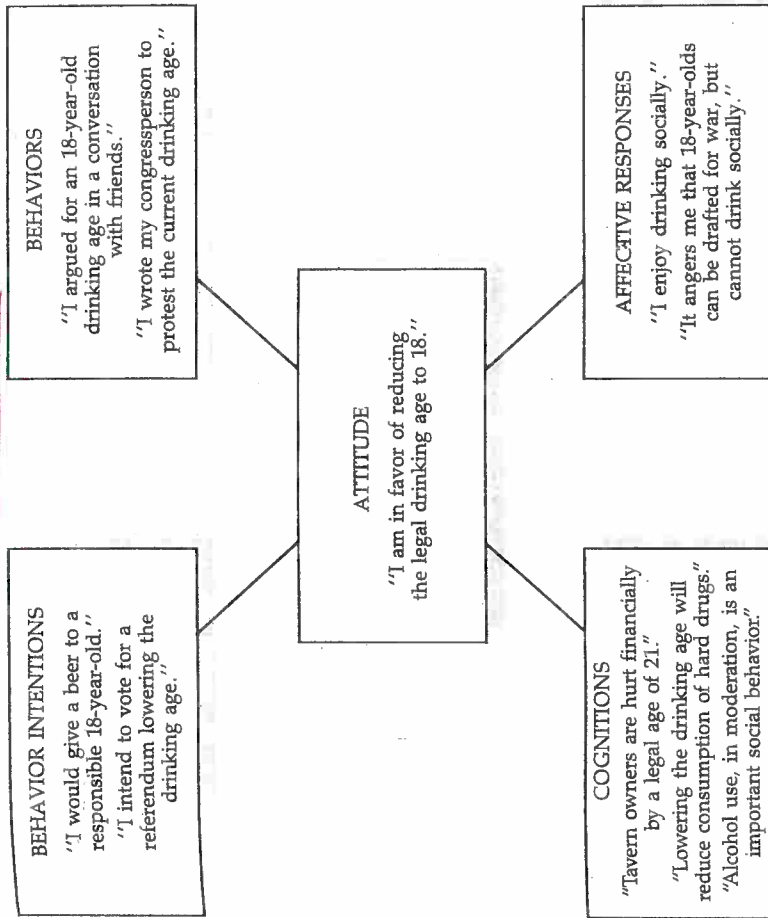


FIGURE 1.1

tude about cameras (you probably like them at least a little; after all, they do capture the moment for posterity).

All together, you have quite a complex mental representation of cameras—an organized set of interrelated thoughts and feelings. Actually, we have mental representations of most objects of our experience, including social issues (abortion, taxes), social groups (Mooreans, liberals), and ideals (democracy, free speech). Along with a pro or con attitude about abortion, for example, a person may also have factual knowledge (fetuses aborted in the first trimester have no recognizable human form), various beliefs (life begins at conception), emotional or affective responses (sadness when thinking of a friend who had an abortion), and behavioral inclinations (to vote for pro-life or pro-choice candidates).

Def. of attitude
 good

An Organizing Theme: Change Begets Change

The interconnectedness of attitudes, cognitions, feelings, intentions, and behaviors into organized systems has a very important implication. It means that change in any one component may lead to change in another. A change in belief may cause revision of the attitude. A new attitude, as already suggested by our earlier examples, may ultimately lead to new behaviors (or as we see in later chapters, a reverse process is possible in which behavior change may cause attitude change). Finally, new attitudes may influence how we think about social objects; and hence, attitude change may cause belief change.

Attitude systems, it should be noted, are not always tightly organized. Some of our attitudes may be based mainly on our feelings and make little contact with beliefs or ideas we hold unless we take pains to think carefully about our attitude (Miller and Tesser, 1986; Wilson et al., 1989). Still, the usual state of affairs is at least some interconnectedness, some "coupling" of attitudinal components.

The usual interconnectedness actually extends further. Attitudes and beliefs about one object may be connected to attitudes and beliefs about another object. For example, one's negative attitude toward free trade with Japan and positive attitude toward giving large companies tax breaks may reflect a common underlying belief that bringing down the domestic unemployment rate is the key to improving the country. If this belief changes, chances are that both attitudes will change as well.

In summary, we have a major theme here, which is a basis for understanding a number of social influence phenomena; specifically, *attitude systems—within and between each other—are organized, such that changes in one facet of a person often cause changes in other facets.*

Further Themes Based On the Central Role of Attitudes

From an influence point of view, attitudes are often the most important component of attitude systems and corresponding mental representations. The tendency to evaluate—to form attitudes—is basic to being human. Indeed, we seem to automatically evaluate just about everything we come across, no matter how brief our encounter or how unimportant the object (Zajonc, 1980). When asked to describe people and objects after a first experience, people almost invariably include some form of good-bad judgment (Osgood et al., 1957). Attitudes, then, are common and pervasive mental reactions. We can have an attitude about something—liking or disliking it—even when the rest of the mental representation is practically devoid of beliefs and actual knowledge. This is true of many of our *prejudices*—the negative attitudes that we may develop about groups of people that we actually know little about.

Attitudes influence perception and thought. In subsequent chapters, we will see that attitudes which initially have little or no basis in knowledge may subsequently affect the acquisition of knowledge and the formation of beliefs that may eventually "fill" the formerly empty mental representation (Pratkanis and Greenwald, 1989). Our overall evaluation of something affects how we interpret what we read and hear about the object. If you have a favorable first impression of a certain new rock artist, for example, you may become especially attentive to subtle aspects of her melodies that fit with your established tastes. If you initially dislike her music, you may hear only what you don't like.

This can be summarized in a second organizing theme (where the first theme stresses mental organization and connectedness). Although it is true that attitudes are shaped by our thinking, the reverse is also true. And so our second basic theme is that *attitudes guide perceptual and cognitive processes.*

Attitudes are easily accessible evaluative summaries. Another important role of attitudes derives from their status as summaries of where we stand on issues. As summary evaluations, they come to mind relatively easily. People don't have the time or mental capacity to think carefully about all of the countless stimuli and situations they encounter. When faced with decisions about social objects, especially decisions that are not earth-shattering, we may not review every belief and fact we have about the object. Rather, we go to the bottom line, conjure up our generalized attitude, and let it guide us.

This role of attitudes as easily accessible summaries brings us to a third theme to be encountered frequently in this book. *Depending on situational and personal circumstances, reactions to influence attempts may range from very thoughtful, analytic, and systematic at one extreme, to superficial, hasty, automatic, and almost "mindless" at the other extreme.* On the "mindless" side, prior attitudes alone may guide reactions. At an even more mindless extreme, we will see behavioral reactions that occur like automatic reflex actions, without even a contemplation of attitude. This often occurs when a prior attitude is weak or nonexistent.

Attitudes are self-defining. Finally, an attitude is a stand about something. ("I dislike this." "I favor that.") As such, our more important attitudes help form our self-definitions (Pratkanis and Greenwald, 1989). That is, they inform the world (and ourselves) what we're all about. Attitudes have "badge value" (Abelson and Prentice, 1989). We are the sum of all our attitudes. As we will learn, self-defining attitudes permeate many behaviors and attitudes on related issues. Moreover, people do not easily give up self-defining attitudes. These facts can have frustrating consequences for would-be influence agents. They also illustrate a final theme: *Since attitudes on important topics may serve and*

sustain one's self-definition and self-esteem, many influence processes involve altering how people perceive themselves—not just the attitude object. We will see later on that in some instances the goal of social influence goes beyond influencing attitudes and changing behavior; it is no less ambitious than "personality change" or "total mind control," as in some cults and military organizations.

It is for a number of good reasons, then, that attitudes are pivotal attack points in many influence strategies. The ultimately desired goal of influence may be behavioral change, but many paths to this final goal are through the network of attitudes.

A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the research material we present in this book is drawn from many fields—including communications, sociology, political science, business management, and consumer behavior—most of it comes from the field of social psychology. In fact, our approach to social influence can be characterized as social-psychological.

What is the social-psychological approach? Basically, it involves four defining characteristics. First, being psychological, the focus is on individual behavior and mental processes. Sociologists focus on groups and institutions, and communications researchers tend to concentrate on the structure and content of the communication itself. By contrast, social psychologists are more concerned with what goes on in people's heads and how their thoughts, feelings, and actions are influenced by other people. We have already provided a taste of this focus with our introductory discussion of how attitudes, beliefs, and other mental events form and mutually influence one another.

The second defining feature of the social psychological approach is its emphasis on situational causes of behavior. A major principle of social psychology is that what goes on *inside* people (the psychological processes) is primarily determined by factors that are *outside* of them. Particularly important factors are what other people are saying or doing and the features of the immediate situation that, through past learning, trigger specific interpretations and behavior patterns. One of the pioneers of social psychology, Kurt Lewin, long ago presented the simple equation that behavior is a joint function of the person's unique personality and the situation in which he or she is functioning. Social psychologists emphasize the second component—the power of the situation—although they still recognize the role that individual dispositions play in the total behavioral scenario. Attitudes, of course, are the favorite dispositional variable of social psychologists. They recognize the important consequences of differences between people in their attitudes. But, primarily, social psychologists are concerned with how attitudes and other

dispositions are affected by social situations and with how situations often have such powerful effects on behavior and thought that they override personality differences between people, making different people respond in similar ways to the same situation. Some of our examples earlier in this chapter give graphic illustration to the power of the immediate situation, most notably that of the Jonestown mass suicides.

A third aspect of social psychology is an emphasis on subjective perception. How people define social situations is often more important than the objective reality. For example, your positive attitude toward a new acquaintance may depend more on your perception that he has a lot in common with you than on his actual similarity as evaluated by raters. Indeed, should reality prove that he is not so similar, you may wonder why you ever liked him to begin with. The answer is social-psychological: what mattered at the time were personal perceptions, or our social construction of reality.

Fourth, and finally, the social psychological approach is scientific and experimental. Social psychologists, as well as other social scientists, treat human behaviors as natural phenomena. Like other phenomena of the natural world—such as the movement of earthquake faults, chemical reactions in rocket fuel injection, and cell growth in plants—human behavior must be studied under controlled circumstances in order to understand the principles by which it works. "Armchair theorizing" is too subjective, prone to bias (especially when the subject matter is *ourselves*) and apt to miss causes that are hard to "see." Hence, the social psychological approach is to make controlled observations, that is, observations which are made under strict rules concerning when to observe and how to code behaviors.

The preferred scientific method of social psychology is the experimental. The major virtue of an experiment is that it allows for a great deal of control over variables. If it is suspected that A causes B, the investigator can design an experiment in which some participants are exposed to A (the experimental group) and others are not (the control group). At the same time, variables C, D, E, and the like, are held equivalent for both groups. If the group exposed to A engages in more B behaviors than the group not exposed to A, logic compels the investigator to conclude that A causes B—at least until better data suggest otherwise.

Practically all of the knowledge and theory about social influence that we will present in this volume is derived from scientific studies. This book's two appendixes review research methods. If you haven't been previously exposed to psychological methodology, or if you think you need a refresher, you may wish to read through the appendixes. Though not absolutely necessary, some familiarity with how social psychological research is done will enrich your understanding and appreciation of the studies we explore.

A LOOK AHEAD

We now have everything in place to begin a journey through the many fascinating paths of social influence in our everyday life. Let us briefly preview this journey. Remember the general idea of an attitude system—that an attitude is the evaluative summary of a personal system of feelings, cognitions, and behaviors regarding an object. Also remember that the system can be entered anywhere, at the level of attitudes, emotions, beliefs, or behaviors. The next four chapters explore three influence pathways through an attitude system. In Chapter 2, we discuss influence forces that are directly aimed at behavior and are capable of changing the influence target's behavior without first enacting any attitude or belief change. You've already heard the labels given to some of these processes, terms such as *obedience*, *conformity*, *compliance*, and *conditioning*. In Chapter 3, the interconnected system idea comes prominently into play, for there we will see how direct changes in behavior can trigger a psychological chain reaction of change in attitudes and beliefs. Perhaps you've rationalized things you've *done* with various after-the-fact reasons. That's one part of the "change behavior first to change attitudes" chain. Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to persuasion—the preferred influence technique of Martin Luther King, Jr., and today's ubiquitous television communications—which tries to change another's attitude by presenting information and arguments aimed at changing beliefs. The general pathway is from beliefs to attitudes (Chapter 4) and, in turn, to behavior (Chapter 5). An additional trick is to make persuasion last (Chapter 5).

We next turn our attention to the theme that some attitudes may be self-defining, to the point where their possessor clings to them in the face of even the most rational appeals—or, paradoxically, is able to be manipulated by influence agents who feign allegiance to the same point of view. More generally, Chapter 6 examines the opposite states of extreme resistance to social influence and extreme susceptibility to it, and how these states can be altered. We take up matters such as the general strategy for getting extremists to moderate their positions, or the specific task of training teenagers to resist the advertising and peer pressure to smoke.

Chapter 7 explores the extent to which influence occurs without the target's awareness of being influenced. Particularly important here are influence techniques and aspects of communication that elicit emotional responses. Conditioning, nonverbal communication (facial expressions and such), and subliminal messages fall into these categories.

By the end of Chapter 7, we will have toured most of the basic theoretical and topical landscape of the world of influence. Along the way, we will have detoured into practical applications and implications at many points. In the final two chapters, the relative emphasis will be re-

versed. Our sights will be set on practical applications, and we will return to theory as we need to. Chapter 8 is concerned with influence processes in the legal system. The field combining psychology and law is growing rapidly. And no wonder. Social influence is a big part of police interrogation, trial presentation, and jury deliberation, to mention some prominent psychologically loaded legal settings. Chapter 9 focuses on what we might call pro-social influence. You know that psychology can be used to sell products and win votes for politicians. But did you know that it is also being used to influence people to take better care of the environment and of themselves? And further, did you know that influence techniques that work with "normal" people can be adapted for use in psychotherapy to help direct distressed individuals back to better mental health? These applications are explored in Chapter 9.

Finally, we offer a word of caution. Reading this book is designed to change *you*! If you read it wisely and well, you can become more effective in your influence attempts and better able to resist unwanted sources of influence in your life. And so be forewarned that our goal is to change some aspects of your belief system. Whether your behavior also changes accordingly is beyond our control; that's largely a matter between you and the nature of the social contexts in which you will travel after you leave us. Enjoy the journey. We have enjoyed charting the paths we will share in this intellectual adventure.

TO SUM UP . . .

In this first chapter we defined social influence and presented dramatic influence examples in interpersonal, persuasion, and mass media settings. Then we described how mental and behavioral reactions to a variety of issues, people, and objects can be understood in terms of attitude systems. Finally, our social-psychological approach was outlined along with a preview of the journey to be taken in the upcoming chapters.

- In a social influence process, the behavior of one person has the effect or intention of changing how another person behaves, feels, or thinks about something.
- Social influence is pervasive; advertising, political campaigns, and psychotherapy all involve influence, as do our daily interactions with friends, family, and peer groups. Influence settings can be categorized in terms of how individualized they are and how many people they reach. In *interpersonal settings*, one or a few influence agents have one-to-one communication with one or a few targets of influence. *Persuasion settings* include one influence agent trying to change a larger number of targets. *Mass media settings* involve an impersonal message delivered through a medium such as TV to targets who may number in the millions.

- The recruitment and indoctrination practices of religious cults, like the Moonies, illustrate a powerful version of influence in interpersonal settings. Young people, at transitional life stages, are persuaded to join a cult community by attractive recruiters and become members who spend most of their time recruiting and soliciting funds. In the cult community, a large arsenal of influence techniques—reinforcements, commitment gaining, constant persuasive messages, resource control, and others—encourages some recruits to stay and convert to the dogma of the cult.
- The effective use of words and rhetoric is the essence of persuasion. Although one was fiery and the other low-key, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ronald Reagan were very effective communicators who helped bring forth social movements. They both emphasized identification and similarity with their audience, delivered clear and optimistic messages, and communicated sincerity with their vocal and facial expressions. Adolph Hitler and Jim Jones promoted mass destruction and mass suicide by using similar skills of persuasion and by staging powerful emotional scenes to accompany their messages.
- The influence of the mass media is illustrated by the great decrease in cigarette smoking since health messages about the risks of smoking began in the 1960s. Even stronger evidence of mass media impact on "the other side" is the fact that 30 percent of all adult Americans still smoke and that thousands, particularly adolescents and women, take up the habit every day. Advertisers create pervasive images of smoking as healthful, sexy, and a badge of personal freedom, while sponsorship of sporting and cultural events furthers the visibility and attractive associations of smoking. Through sophisticated market segmentation research, promotional blitzes are pitched to the activities and needs of people identified as likely to start or continue to smoke.
- Even if an influence attempt does not immediately affect behavior, it may change beliefs or attitudes, thus "setting the stage" for later changes in behavior. An attitude is an evaluative disposition toward some object that forms the core of one's attitude system regarding the object. There are five components of an attitude system: the attitude, cognitions (beliefs and knowledge), affective responses (feelings), behavioral intentions, and behavior itself.
- Because attitude systems are organized, a change in any one component (e.g., attitude) may cause a change in any other (e.g., behavior). Change in the attitude system about one object (e.g., cigarette smoking) may cause changes in attitude systems about related objects (e.g., advertising companies).
- Attitudes are the most important component of attitude systems. Our attitudes affect our thoughts and perceptions, serve as position summaries that we can access from memory and use with little effort, and sustain our sense of identity.
- The social-psychological approach to influence has four defining features: (1) a focus on individual behavior and mental processes, (2) an emphasis on the power of social situations to cause behavior, (3) an assumption that perception of social situations more strongly affects behavior than does objective reality, and (4) a reliance on scientific methods for generating and evaluating evidence.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Compare and contrast interpersonal, persuasion, and mass media settings using recent occasions in which you feel you were yourself the target of influence in such settings. How were these settings and the corresponding techniques alike? How did they differ?
2. Most of us at one point or another adopt the attitudes, values, and beliefs of a social group (such as a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, or political club). Identify ways in which the influence exerted by these groups resembles and differs from that exerted by cults like the Moonies. What makes cult influence more "coercive" than the influence of the aforementioned groups?
3. List the reasons why public health campaigns were successful in convincing millions of people to quit smoking or not take it up. For each reason, explain how cigarette advertisers have tried to counter it. Why do you think these countermeasures work with some people and not with others?
4. Describe a personal attitude system of your own associated with an issue or object that is important to you. Identify each of the five components, and explain how the attitude component might be self-defining and useful to you.

