Value of Failure

Module 6: Coping with failure

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Module 6: Coping with failure

Content

1. The self
2. Principles of self-perception
3. Self-presentation
Module 6: Coping with failure

1. The self

- **Goals and Expectations:** Have you met your goals in the past?
  
  - **Looking back:**
    - Did you have a detailed plan in the past?
    - Did you achieve your goals?
    - What was different from what you expected?
    - If you could do something differently…
      - what would it be?
      - why would you like to change it?
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1. The self

• **Goals and Expectations**: What are your goals and expectations?

  – **Looking back**:
    • What are your goals
    • What do you want to achieve…
      – this semester?
      – for the year?
      – in the next 5 years?
    • What are your expectations about your achievements?
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1. The self

• **The self:** Concepts, schemas and possible selves

  – **Definitions:**
    - **Self-concept:** an organized collection of beliefs about the self
    - **Self-schemas:** the self-concept is composed of various self-schemas, or beliefs about the self
      - These beliefs include
        » personality traits
        » abilities
        » physical features
        » values
        » goals
        » social roles
    - **Possible selves:** refer to one’s conceptions about the kind of person one might become in the future
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1. The self

• The self: Self-perceptions and self-discrepancies

  – Important terms to understand:
    • Self-perceptions: Individuals have the following self-perceptions
      – Actual self: Qualities people think they actually possess
      – Ideal self: Qualities people would like to have
      – Ought self: Qualities people think they should possess

  • Self-discrepancies: Mismatch between the actual, ideal, and/or ought self
    – Self-discrepancies can have various effects:
      » “actual self” falls short of the “ideal self”  →  dejected and sad
      » “actual self” falls short of the “ought self”  →  irritable and guilty
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1. The self

- The self: Effects of self-discrepancies

  - Effects:
    - According to E. Tory Higgins (1989), discrepancies between actual and ideal selves produce disappointment and sadness, whereas discrepancies between actual and ought selves result in irritability and guilt. Such self-discrepancies can make individuals vulnerable to more serious psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety-related disorders.
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1. The self

• **The self:** Factors shaping the self-concept

  – **Festinger’s social comparison theory:**
    • Festinger’s (1954) social comparison theory states that we compare ourselves with others in order to assess and/or improve our abilities
    • A reference group is a set of people who are used as a gauge in making social comparisons
      – If we want to improve, we choose reference groups of superior quality
      – If we want to bolster self-esteem, we choose inferior groups
    • Usually, our self-perceptions are distorted in a positive direction
    • Feedback from others is important in balancing our own observations
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1. The self

- The self: Factors shaping the self-concept (continued)

  - Festinger’s social comparison theory:
    - Social context
      - We may view ourselves more, or less, critically, depending on the situation
    - Cultural values and self-concept
    - Cultural values
      - In cultures that value identity is defined more in terms of personal attributes
      - In cultures that value identity is defined more in terms of the groups one belongs to
      - People raised in individualistic cultures
        » Have an independent view of the self
        » View themselves as unique, self-contained, and distinct from others
      - People raised in collectivist cultures
        » Have an interdependent view of the self
        » View themselves as more connected to others
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1. The self

- The self: Factors shaping the self-concept (continued)

  - Independent and interdependent views of the self

Independent self-system

- Father
- Sibling
- Co-worker
- Self
- Mother
- Friend

Interdependent self-system

- Father
- Sibling
- Co-worker
- Friend
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1. The self

- **Self-esteem**: What affects the view on ourselves?

  - The structure of self-esteem

Source: Adapted from Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976

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1. The self

• Self-esteem: What affects the view on ourselves? (continued)

– Self-esteem and adjustment
  • Self-esteem is strongly and consistently connected to happiness
  • People with high self-esteem also feel more likeable and attractive, have better relationships, and make better impressions on others
  • People with high self-esteem persist longer in the face of failure and cope better with setbacks
  • Self-esteem is not linked to achievement
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2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception:** What changes the view on ourselves?

  – Processes of self-perception
    • Cognitive processes affect the ability to maintain a view of the self
    • Two different types of processes are at work:
      1. **Automatic processing** – default mode in which we handle information without much deliberate decision-making (e.g., going through our morning routine)
      2. **Controlled processing** – active thinking required for important decision-making and analysis
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2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception**: What changes the view on ourselves?

  – **Self-attributions**
    • inferences that people draw about the causes of their own behaviour
    • Three key dimensions of attributions:
      1. Whether they are internal or external.
        » *Internal attributions* – ascribe the causes of behaviour to personal dispositions, traits, abilities, and feelings
        » *External attributions* – ascribe behaviour to situational demands
      2. Whether they are stable or unstable.
        » *Stable attributions* – the cause of behaviour is unlikely to change over time
        » *Unstable attributions* – the cause of behaviour is variable, or subject to change
        » This dimension interacts with the internal-external one and yields four types of attributions about success and failure
      3. Whether they are controllable or uncontrollable
        » This dimension simply considers whether or not the individual has any control over the behaviour
2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception:** What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

  – **Self-attributions**
    • Weiner’s model assumes that people’s explanations for success and failure emphasize internal versus external causes and stable versus unstable causes
      – Example:
        » if you attribute an outcome to great effort or to lack of effort, you are citing causes that lie within the person
        » Since effort can vary over time, the causal factors at work are unstable
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2. Principles of self-perception

- Self-perception: What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

- Self-attributions
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2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception**: What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

  - **Explanatory style**
    - Explanatory style – refers to the tendency to use similar causal attributions for a wide variety of events in one’s life
      - People who use an optimistic explanatory style attribute setbacks to external, unstable, and specific factors.
      - People who use a pessimistic explanatory style attribute setbacks to internal, stable, and global factors
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2. Principles of self-perception

- **Self-perception**: What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

  - Effects of attributional style on expectations, emotions and behaviour

  ![Diagram](https://www.valueoffailure.com)

  - **Negative Event**: Failing an exam
  - **Attributional style**
    - Pessimistic explanatory style
      - Internal stable, global
        - “I failed the exam because I am stupid”
      - Lack of control over future events
        - “There is nothing I can do about it. I’ll never get through university.”
    - Optimistic explanatory style
      - External, unstable, specific
        - “I failed the exam because unusual pressures at work prevented me from studying”
      - Control over future events
        - “I’ll have more time to study next time and I’ll do much better.”
  - **Outcomes**
    - Chronic negative feelings, depression
      - Passive behaviour, learned helplessness
    - Temporary negative feelings
      - Active goal-directed behaviour
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2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception:** What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

  – **Motives of self-understanding:**
    1. **Self-assessment:** desire for truthful information about oneself
    2. **Self-verification:** preference for feedback that matches our self-view
    3. **Self-improvement:** looking to successful others in order to improve ourselves
    4. **Self-enhancement:** desire to maintain positive feelings about oneself

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2. Principles of self-perception

• **Self-perception**: What changes the view on ourselves? (continued)

  – **Methods of self-enhancement**
    1. **Downward social comparison**: a defensive tendency to compare oneself with someone whose troubles are more serious than one’s own
    2. **Self-serving bias**: tendency to attribute one’s successes to personal factors and one’s failures to situational factors
    3. **Basking in reflected glory**: tendency to enhance one’s image by publicly announcing one’s association with those who are successful
    4. **Self-handicapping**: tendency to sabotage one’s performance to provide an excuse for possible failure
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2. Principles of self-perception

- **Self-regulation**: How we control our behaviour
  - **Definitions**
  - **Self-regulation**: the process of directing and controlling one’s behaviour
    » According to the ego depletion model, people have a limited amount of self-control
      - Example: if you successfully resist temptation to indulge yourself with sweets today, it is more difficult to do so tomorrow
  - **Self-efficacy**: one’s belief about one’s ability to perform behaviours that should lead to expected outcomes
    » Self-efficacy is important to healthy adjustment
    » This is important to adjustment because increasing self-efficacy is beneficial to one’s physical and mental health
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2. Principles of self-perception

- **Self-regulation**: How we control our behaviour? (continued)

  - **Sources of self-efficacy**
    - Self-efficacy can be developed and usually comes from four sources:
      1. **Mastery experiences**
         - Learning new skills increases self-efficacy
         - It is especially important to persist in the face of mistakes or failure
      2. **Vicarious experiences**
         - Watching others to learn a new skill
      3. **Persuasion and encouragement**
      4. **Interpretation of emotional arousal**
         - When we try new things, we may become nervous
         - It is important to attribute this to normal arousal needed to do well, rather than fear
2. Principles of self-perception

- **Self-regulation**: How we control our behaviour? (continued)

- Self-defeating behaviours
  - **Definition**: seemingly intentional actions that thwart a person’s self-interest

- Three models of self-defeating behavior:
  1. **Deliberate self-destruction**
  2. **Trade-offs**
    - engaging in short-term, potentially harmful behaviours, in order to pursue healthy long-term goals
  3. **Counterproductive strategies**
    - persisting in ineffective strategies to achieve a goal
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3. Self-presentation

- **Definitions**
  - **Public self**: an image presented to others in social interactions
    - Public selves can vary according to the situation, or role, that people are in. Thus, we have multiple public selves
    - However, adjustment is best when there is considerable overlap, or integration, in the various public selves
  - **Impression management**: usually conscious efforts by people to influence how others think of them
    - Research on impression management has identified the following patterns of behaviour:
      » People try to make positive impressions when interacting with strangers
      » People shift toward modesty with those who know them well
  - **Self-monitoring**: the degree to which people attend to and control the impressions they make on others
    - High self-monitors
      » are more concerned about making favourable impressions and are good at interpreting what others see
    - Low self-monitors
      » are more likely to express their true feelings or attitudes
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3. Self-presentation

- Self-presentation: How others see us (continued)

  - Impression management strategies
    - Impression management strategies include
      1. Ingratiation
         » behaving in ways to make oneself likeable to others
      2. Self-promotion
         » accenting your strong points in order to earn respect
      3. Exemplification
         » demonstrating exemplary behaviour in order to boost your integrity or character
      4. Negative acknowledgment
         » admitting your flaws
      5. Intimidation
         » using physical or emotional threats to get what you want from others
      6. Supplication
         » acting weak or dependent in order to get favours from others
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3. Self-presentation

• **Building self-esteem: How to change your personal self**

  – Why self-esteem is important
    • self-esteem is important because individuals with low self-esteem are
      – More prone to depression
      – More demoralized by failure
      – More anxious in relationships
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3. Self-presentation

- **Building self-esteem: How to change your personal self** (continued)

  - **Guidelines to build self-esteem:**
    - **Seven guidelines for building self-esteem:**
      1. **Control your self-image**
         - You can change your self-image to a more positive one
      2. **Learn about yourself**
         - People with low self-esteem don’t know as much about themselves as do those with high self-esteem
      3. **Set your own goals**
         - Don’t let others set your goals
      4. **Recognize unrealistic goals**
         - It’s ok not to try everything. Do the things that can be done
      5. **Modify negative self-talk**
         - Remember to use an optimistic explanatory style when confronting successes and failures
      6. **Emphasize your strengths**
      7. **Approach others with a positive outlook**
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• What we discussed today
  – how we our “self” works
  – self-perception
  – how we present ourself

• Thank you for your attention

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