

**MODULE 74 ATTRIBUTION, ATTITUDES, AND ACTIONS**

**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS**

- **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS** is the scientific study of how we think about, influence, and relate to one another.
- **ATTRIBUTION THEORY** is the theory that we explain someone's behavior by crediting either the situation or the person's disposition. **FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR** is the tendency for observers, when analyzing others' behavior, to underestimate the impact of the situation and to overestimate the impact of personal disposition. Acting that way for the purposes of the environment. We are most likely to commit the fundamental attribution error when a stranger act badly. Our attributions affect our actions. And our actions affect our attitudes.

**ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS**

- **ATTITUDES** are feelings, often influence by our beliefs, that predispose our reactions to objects, people, and events.
- **PERIPHERAL ROUTE PERSUASION** occurs when people are influenced by incidental cues, such as a speaker's attractiveness. **CENTRAL ROUTE PERSUASION** occurs when interested people focus on the arguments and respond with favorable thoughts. External pressure overrides the attitude-behavior link.
- **FOOT-IN-THE-DOOR PHENOMENON** is the tendency-for people who have first agreed to a small request to comply later with a larger request. Start small and build.
- **ROLE** is a set of expectations (norms) about a social position, defining how those in the position ought to behave. Philip Zimbardo randomly assigned some volunteers to be guards and gave them uniforms to enforce certain rules. Others were prisoners and were to play their role accordingly. After only 6 days, Zimbardo called off the study.
- **COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY** is the theory that we act to reduce the discomfort (dissonance) we feel when two of our thoughts (cognitions) are inconsistent. For example, when we become aware that our attitudes and our actions clash, we can reduce the resulting dissonance by changing our attitude. Changing our behavior can change how we think about others and how we feel about ourselves.

**BE ABLE TO ANSWER:** Driving to school one snowy day, Marco narrowly misses a car that slides through a red light. "Slow down! What a terrible drive," he thinks to himself. Moments later, Marco himself slips through an intersection and yelps, "Wow! These roads are awful. The city plows need to get out here." What social psychology principle has Marco just demonstrated? Explain.

**PRACTICE FRQ:** Explain the fundamental attribution error.