

MODULE 75 CONFORMITY AND OBEDIENCE

CONFORMITY: COMPLYING WITH SOCIAL PRESSURES

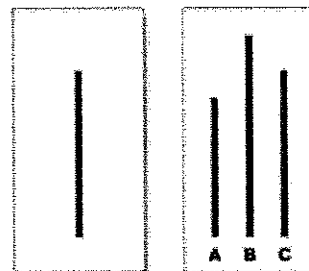
- We are natural mimics, unconsciously imitating others' expressions, postures, and voice tones – the Chameleon Effect.
 - Automatic mimicry helps us to empathize – to feel what others are feeling.
- CONFORMITY** is the mimicry where we adjust our behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard. Solomon Asch and the line test study.

Asch's Conformity Experiments

- Question: Which of the lines on the second card (A, B, or C) is the same length as the line on the first card?
- "That we have found the tendency to conformity in our society so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call White Black is a matter of concern. It raises questions about our ways of education and about the values that guide our conduct" (95)



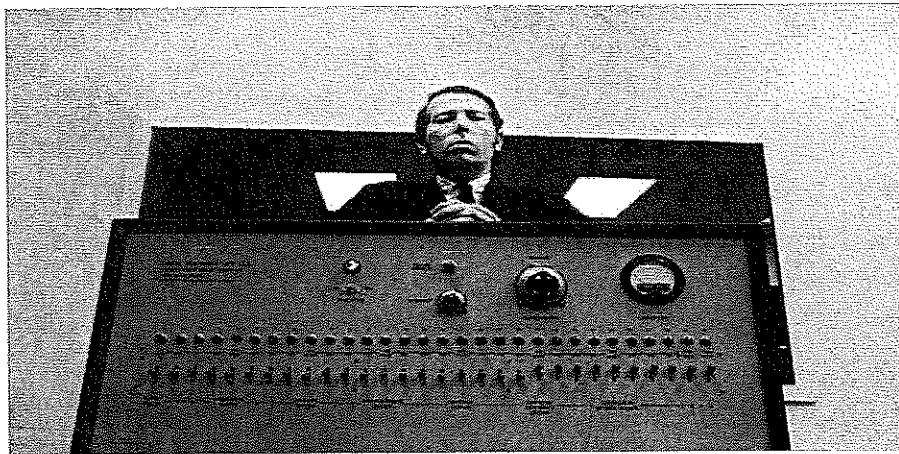
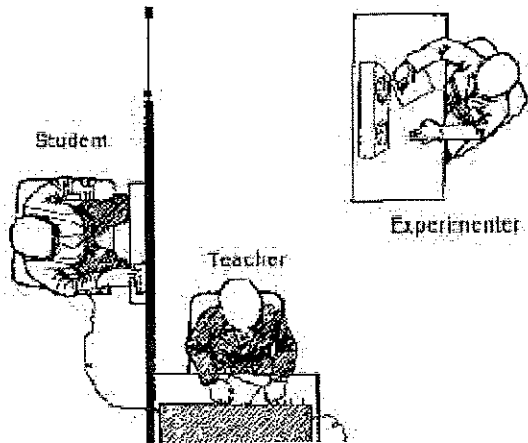
Solomon Asch
(1907 – 1996)



- We are more likely to conform when we: are made to feel incompetent or insecure, are in a group with at least three people, are in a group in which everyone else agrees, admire the group's status and attractiveness, have not made a prior commitment to any response, know that others in the group will observe our behavior, and are from a culture that strongly encourages respect for social standards.
- **NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE** is the influence resulting from a person's desire to gain approval or avoid disapproval. **INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE** is the influence resulting from one's willingness to accept others' opinions about reality.
- Is conformity good or bad? The answer depends partly on our culturally influenced values.

OBEDIENCE: FOLLOWING ORDERS

- Stanley Milgram and the “Learning” “Teacher” Obedience Experiment.



- Would you follow the experimenter’s commands to shock someone? At what level would you refuse to obey? Milgram asked that question in a survey before he started his experiments. More than 60% of the male participants complied fully – right up to the last switch.
- Various methods for obedience to occur: the person giving the orders was close at hand and was perceived to be a legitimate authority figure, the authority figure was supported by a prestigious institution, the victim was depersonalized or at a distance, even in another room, there were no role models for defiance.

BE ABLE TO ANSWER: What types of situations have researchers found to be most likely to encourage obedience in participants?

PRACTICE FRQ: Define conformity and obedience. Then, provide an example of each.