

Social Psychology



Attitude



Attraction



Aggression

Group Behavior

Social Psychology (study of how other people influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions)

Attribution Theory

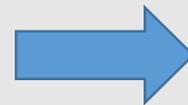
- Tries to explain how people determine the cause of the behavior they observe.

It is either a....

- Situational (external) Attribution – *situation demands it.*
- Dispositional (internal) Attribution – *personal characteristics*



Why is this baby smiling?



"Someone must have just played with the baby."



"The baby must be a happy baby."

Imagine you're driving down the highway and a car goes flying past you, then quickly moves into your lane, cutting you off.

Which statement most closely matches your first response?

A. #\$\$%@ reckless driver!

B. The driver must be having a hard day.

Imagine you're checking out at a grocery store. The cashier smiles at you and greets you warmly

Which statement most closely matches your first response?

A. The cashier is a very friendly person!

B. The cashier is just doing what a cashier is supposed to do.

Our Thoughts About Others: Mistaken Attributions (2 examples)

1. Fundamental Attribution Error:

- This is when people *overestimate* the role of personal factors and *underestimate* the role of environmental factors.
(assuming a person's behavior is a result of a personality trait.)
- If we are the person *doing* the behavior we are more likely to emphasize external factors.
- If we are *observing* behavior we are more likely to emphasize the internal qualities of the person.

See if you can find the error in the following comment:

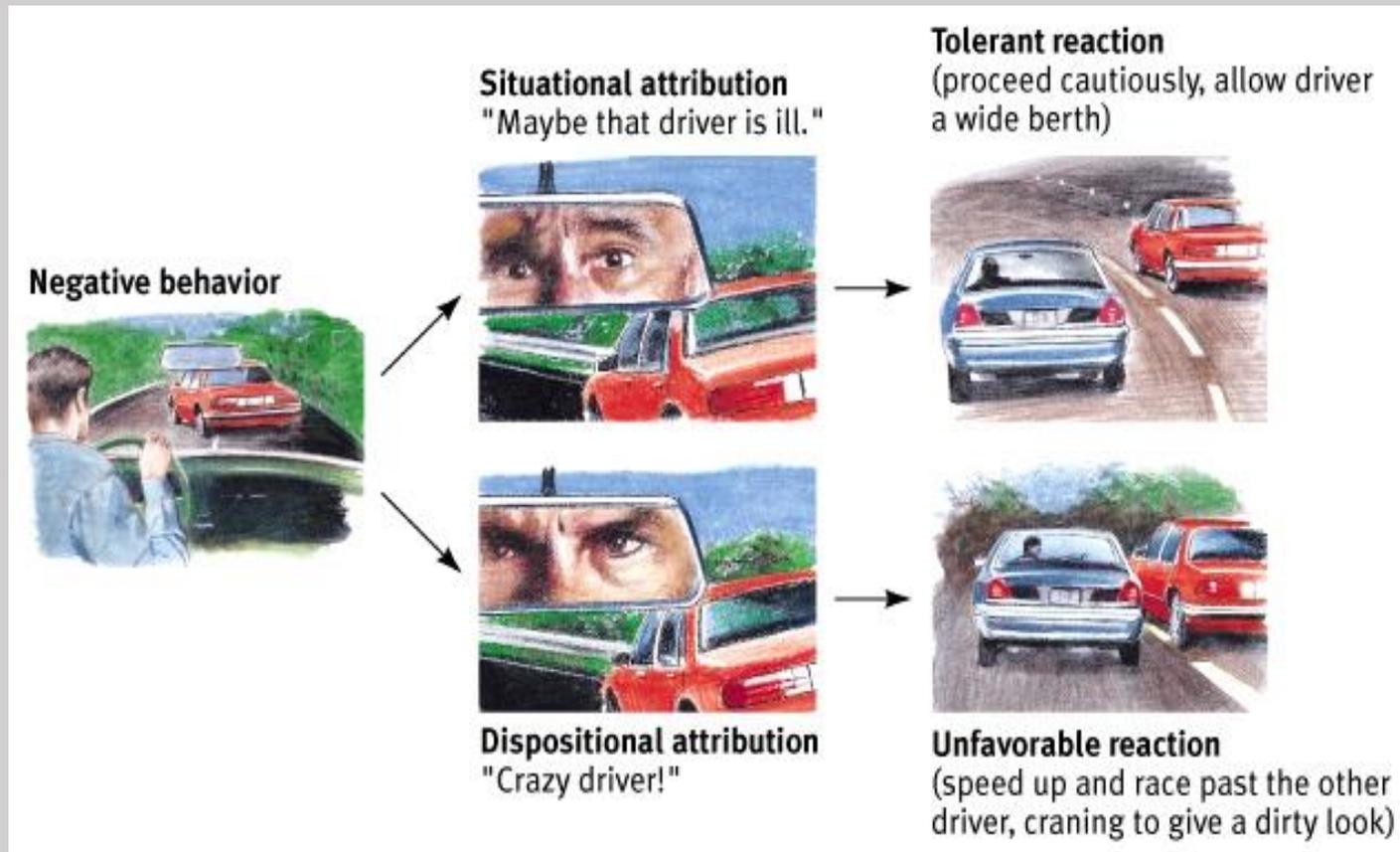
“I noticed the new guy tripping and stumbling as he walked in. How clumsy can you be? Does he never watch where he’s going?”

What’s the error?

Hint: Next day...

“Hey, they need to fix this rug! I tripped on it on the way in!

Not everyone tripped? Well, not everyone had a test he was late for and his cell phone was buzzing.”



Attributing Behavior to Persons or to Situations

When a teacher sees a student that may fall asleep and not pay attention in the classroom, what might that teacher believe is the cause of the student's behavior?

Essentially, **the fundamental attribution error (fae)** can be summed up by stating:



*We tend to overemphasize _____
attribution and underemphasize _____
attribution.*