

Social Self



Discussion Questions

1. What is a self-concept? How do we develop a self-concept?
2. What is self-esteem? How is it determined?
3. What is self-regulation?
4. How do we enhance our self-esteem?
5. What is self-presentation?



**What is a self-concept? How
do we develop a self-
concept?**

What is a self-concept?

- **Self-concept:** All your beliefs about yourself



What is a self-concept?

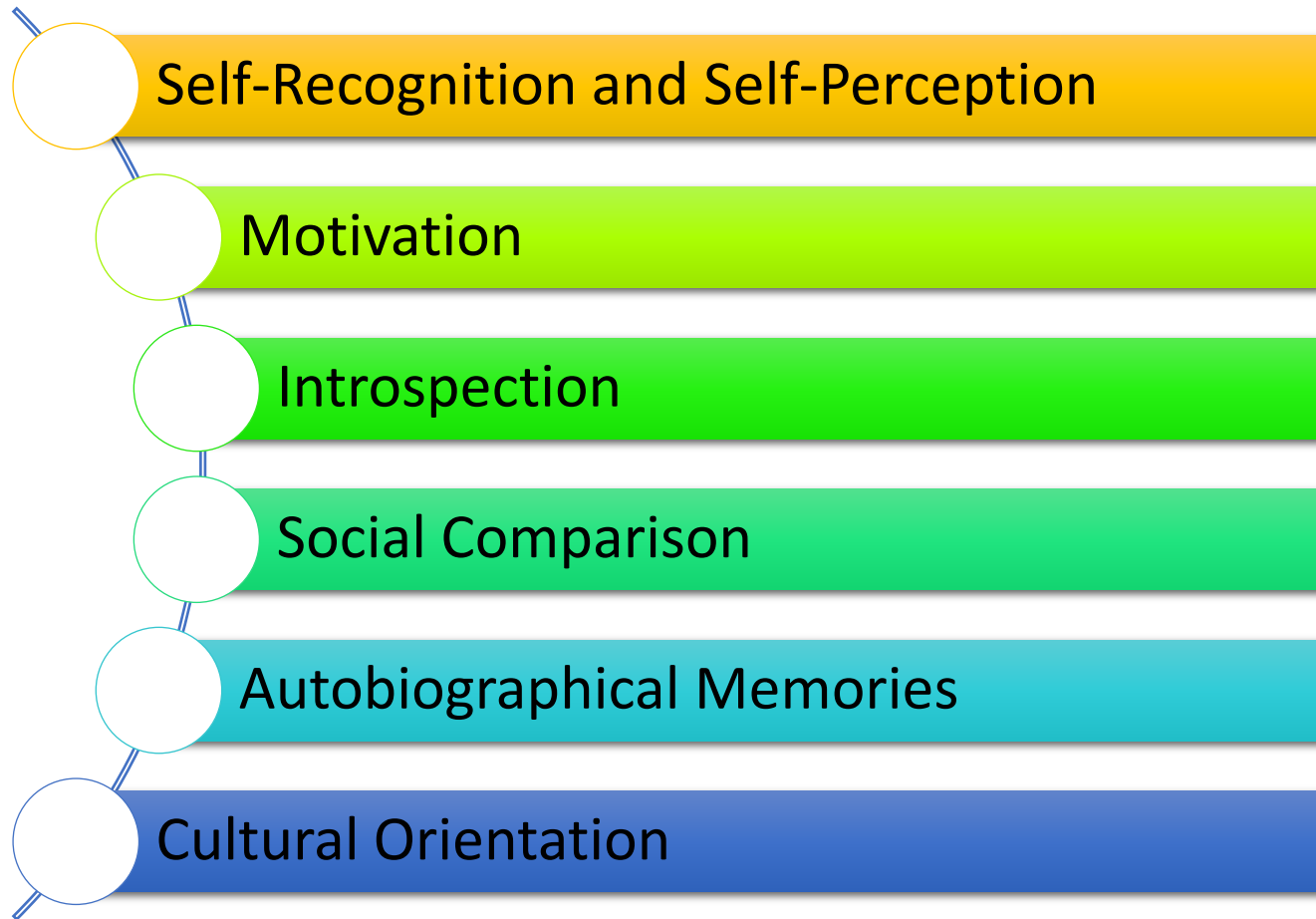
- Inner self-concept
- Outer self-concept
- Stable yet malleable
- Molded by life experiences and the social context
- Multifaceted



What is a self-concept?

- Affect (and Cognition) → Self-esteem
 - How do we evaluate ourselves and defend against threats to our self-esteem?
- Behavior (and Cognition) → Self-presentation
 - How do we regulate our actions and present ourselves?
- Cognition → Self-concept
 - How do we come to know ourselves and maintain a stable sense of identity?

How do we develop a self-concept?



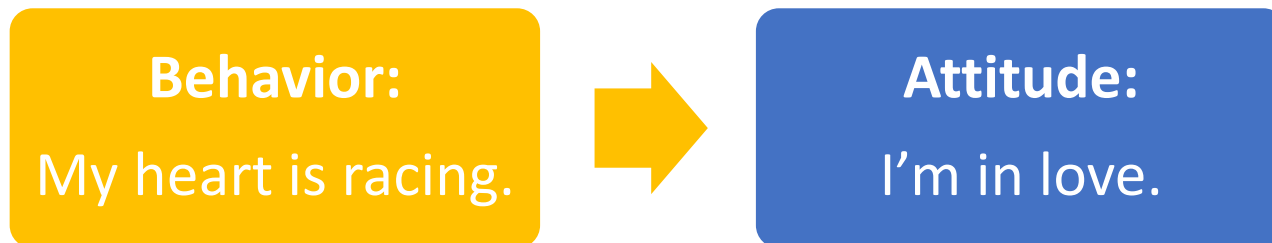
How do we develop a self-concept?



- Self-recognition begins at about 18-24 months
- Both humans and non-humans

How do we develop a self-concept?

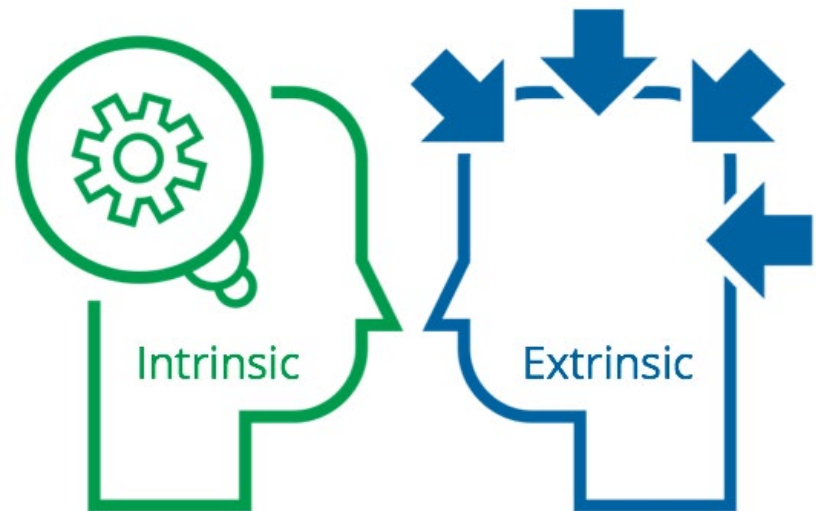
- **Self-perception:** The process of perceiving information about the self
- **Self-perception theory:** Says we understand ourselves by observing our own behavior in ambiguous situations (Bem, 1972)



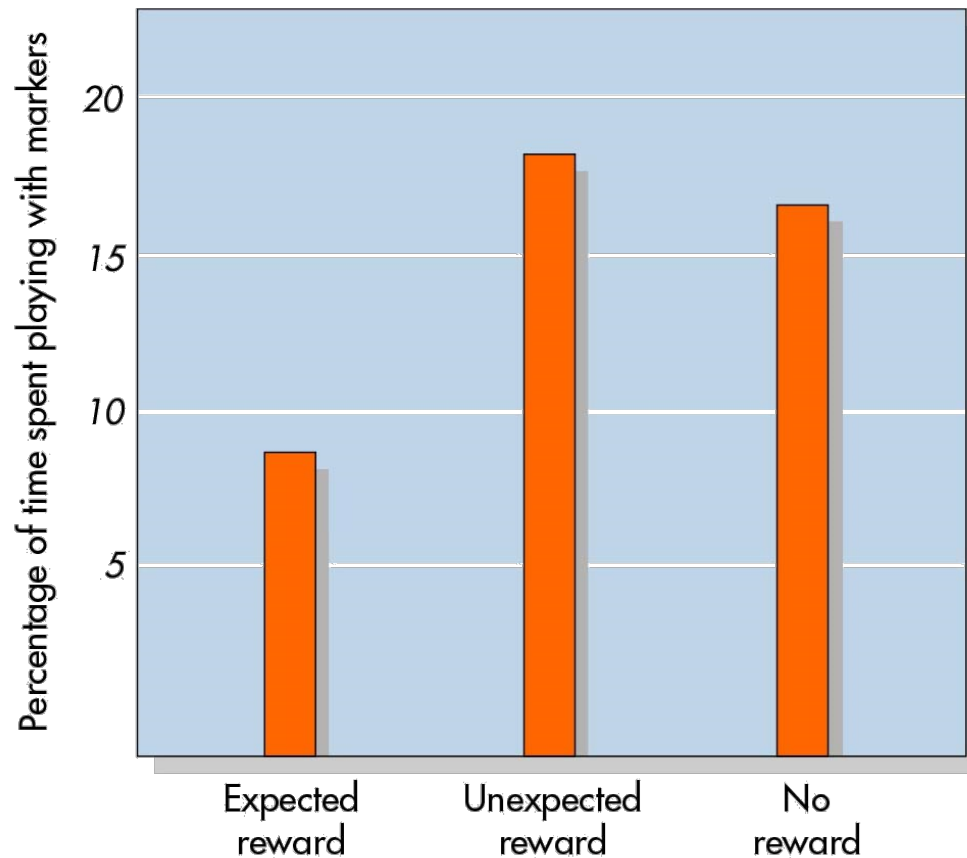
How do we develop a self-concept?

- **Intrinsic motivation:**
“Originates in factors within a person”
 - **Over-justification effect:** Occurs when an external reward undermines intrinsic motivation

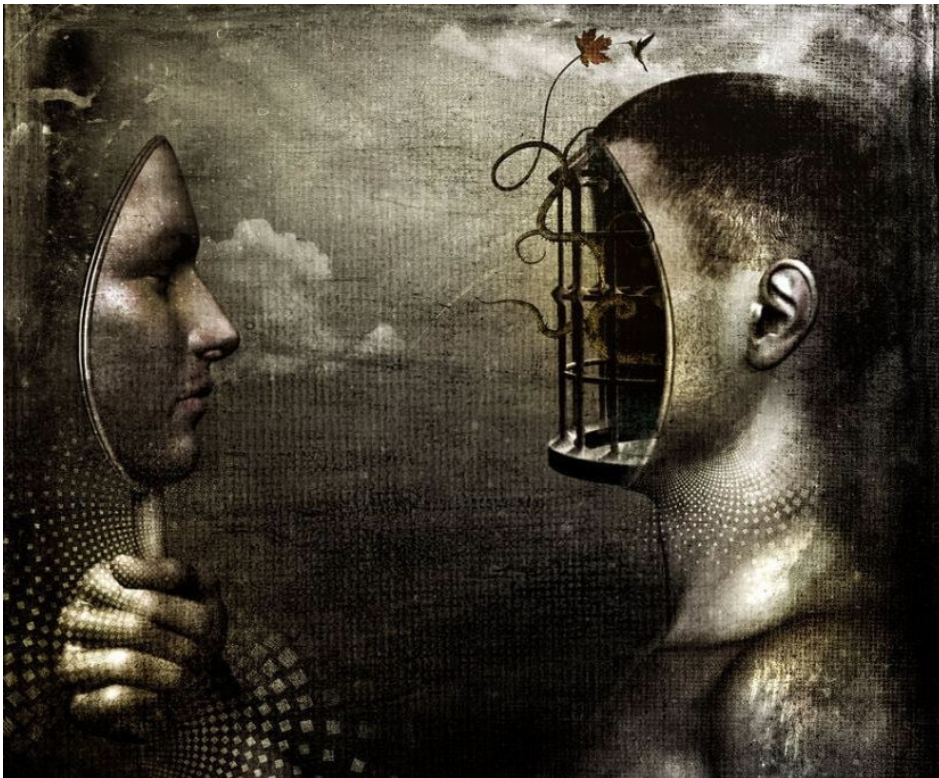
- **Extrinsic motivation:**
“Originates in factors outside the person”



How do we develop a self-concept?



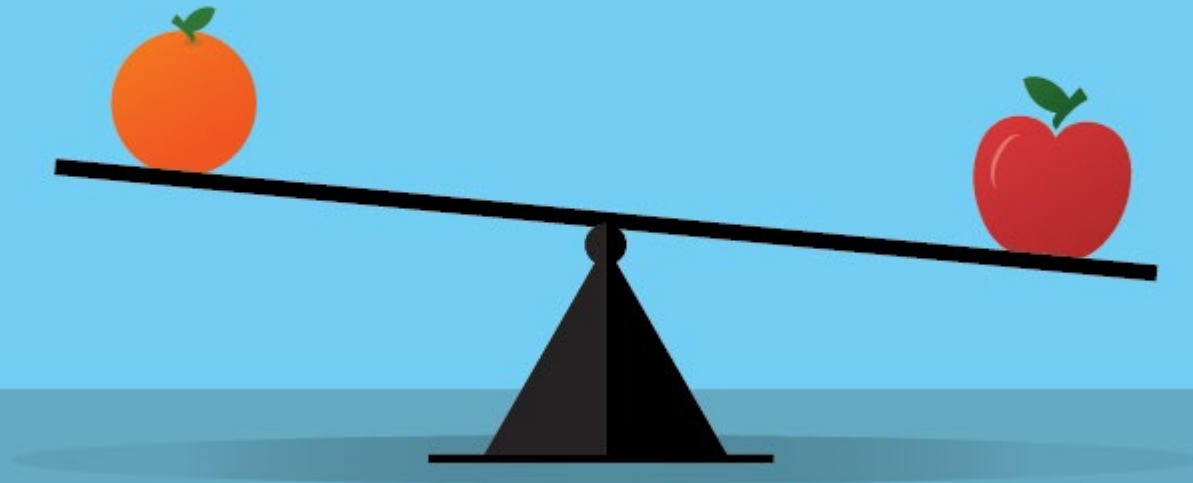
How do we develop a self-concept?



- **Introspection:**
Looking inward
at your own
thoughts and
feelings
- Not always
accurate

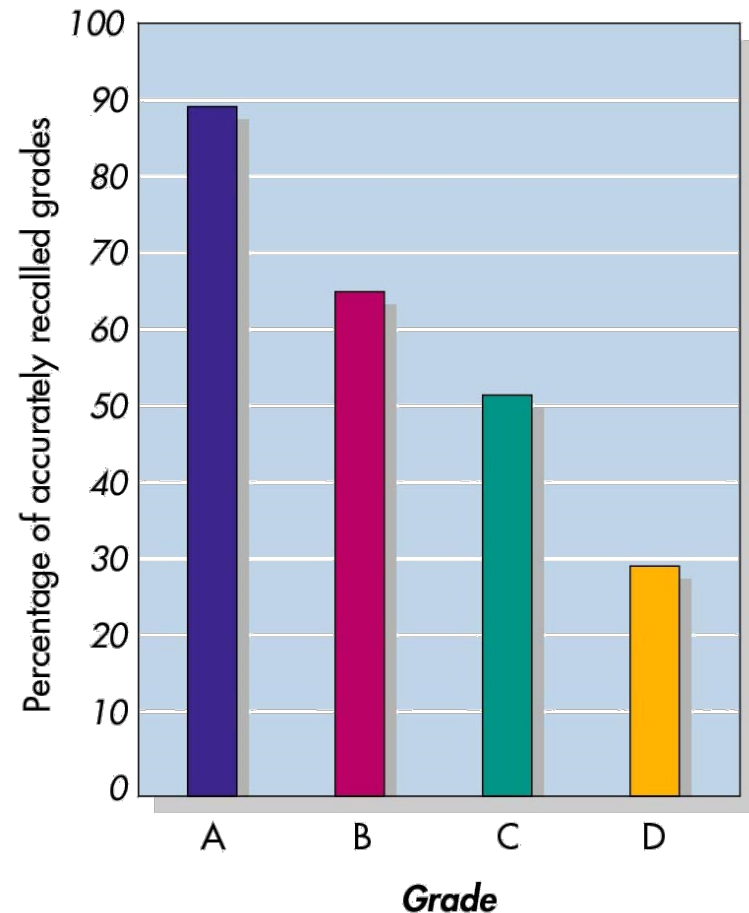
How do we develop a self-concept?

- **Social comparison theory:** Suggests we compare ourselves to others who are similar to us and near us (Festinger, 1954)
 - Occurs when objective information is not available



How do we develop a self-concept?

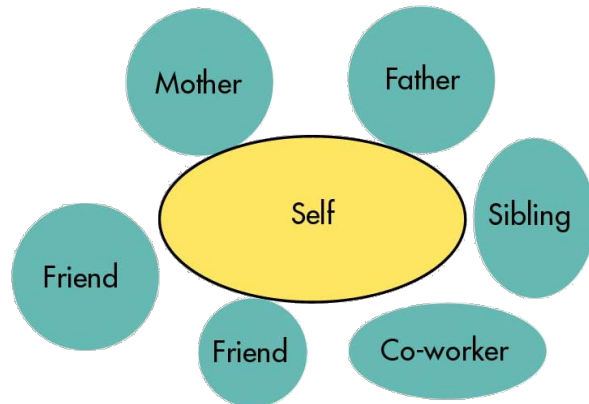
- **Autobiographical memories:**
Memories of significant life events
- More recent memories
- Malleable



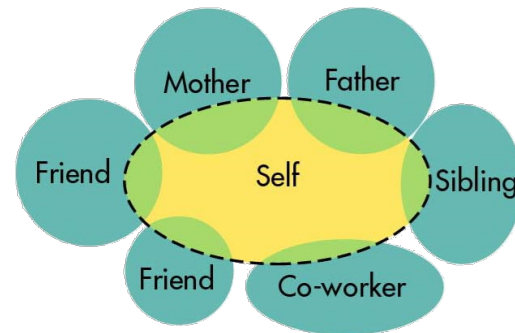
How do we develop a self-concept?

- **Individualism:** Cultures that value the self, independence, competition, and standing out
- **Collectivism:** Cultures that value the group, interdependence, harmony, and unity

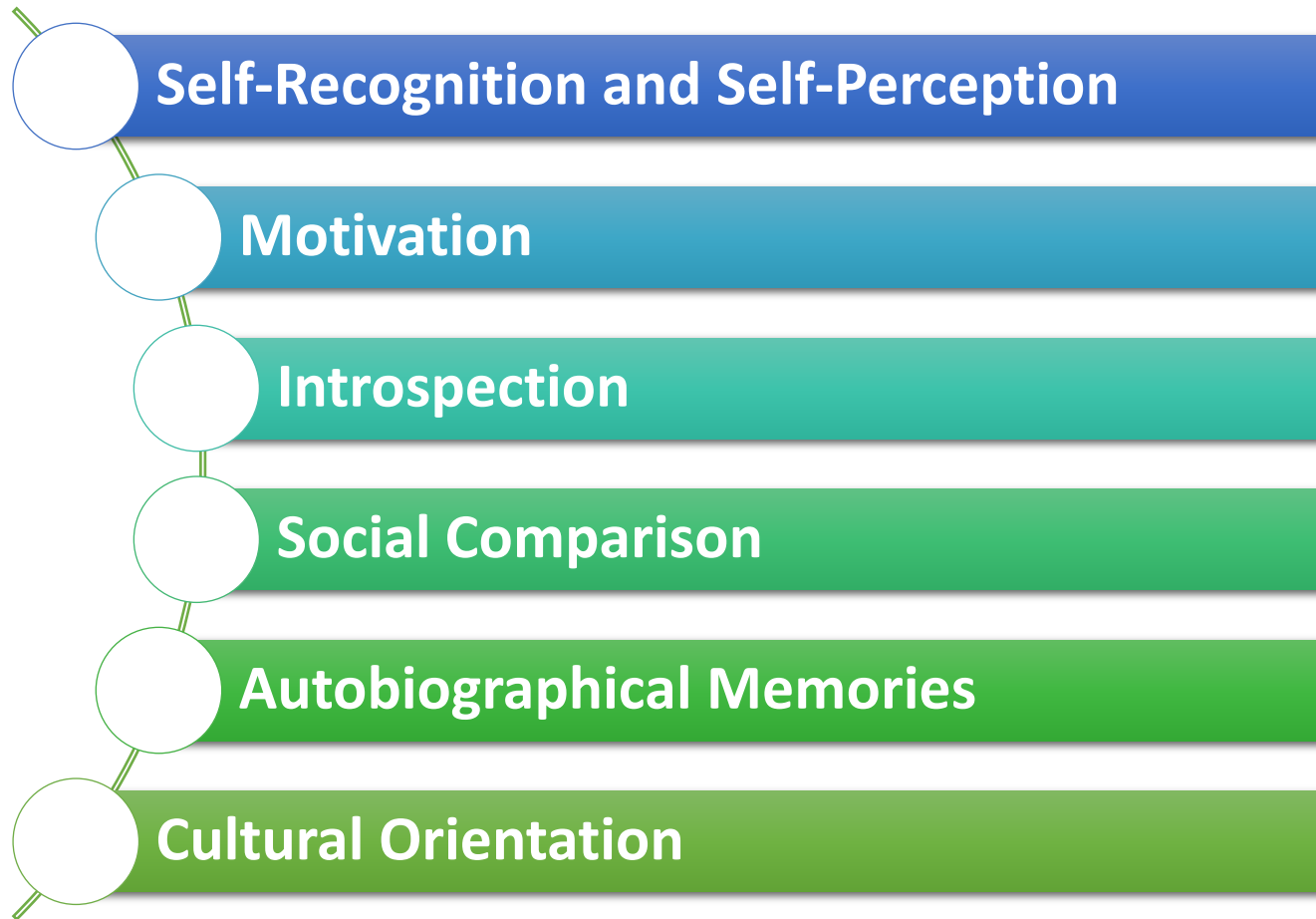
A. Independent View of Self



B. Interdependent View of Self



How do we develop a self-concept?





**What is self-esteem? How is
it determined?**

What is self-esteem?

- **Self-esteem:** Positive and negative evaluations of ourselves
- Global and domain-specific
- Fluctuates over time
- Gender and race differences? (Kling et al., 1999; Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000)
- Positive life outcomes?



"I'm the best
at what I do."



"I have zero
skills."

How is self-esteem determined?

- **Self-discrepancy theory:** Suggests self-esteem depends on the match between the actual self and the “ought to be” and “would like to be” selves (Higgins, 1989)

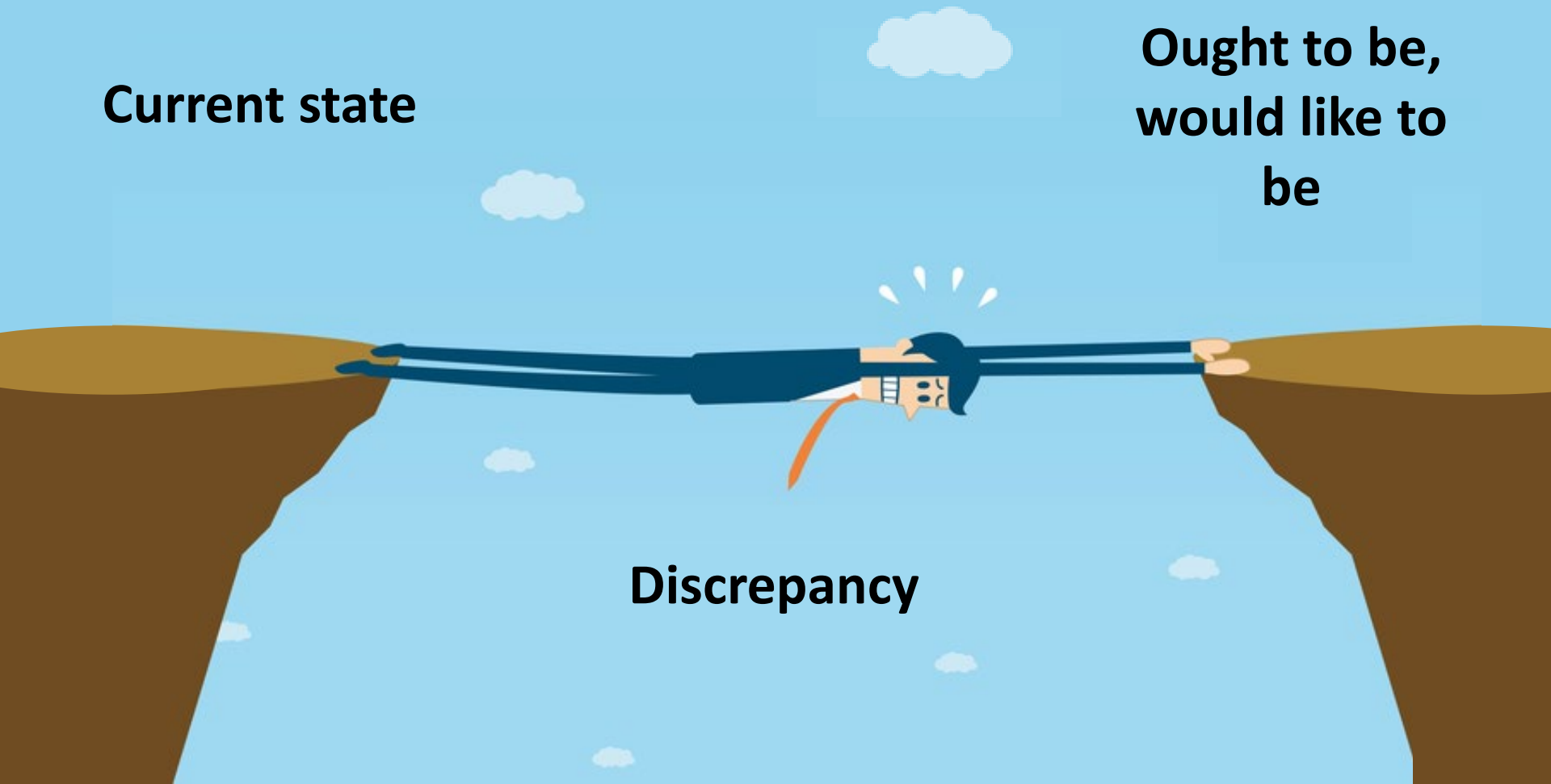


How is self-esteem determined?

Current state

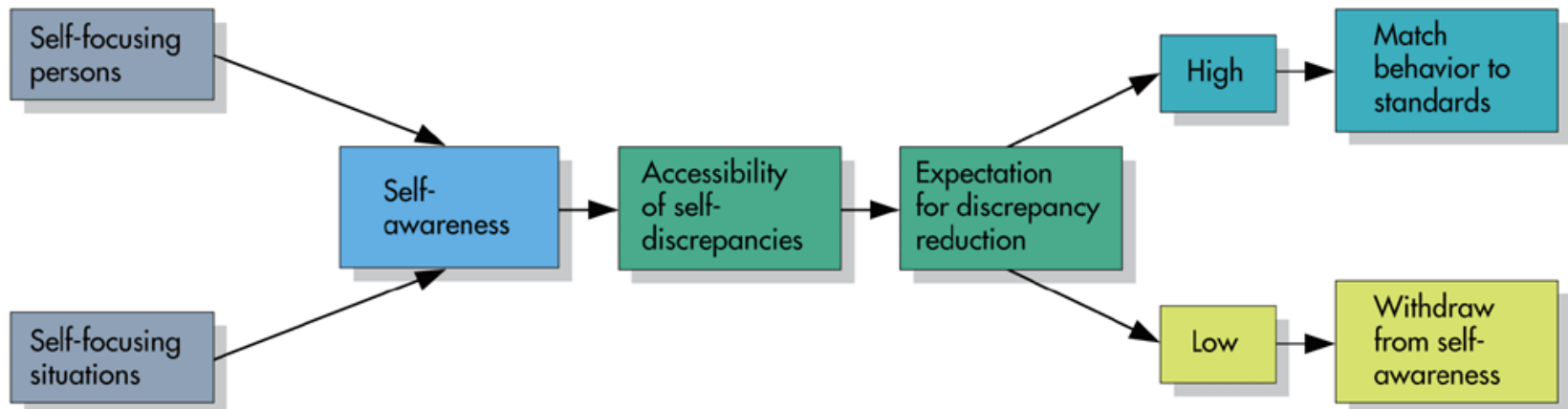
**Ought to be,
would like to
be**

Discrepancy



How is self-esteem determined?

- **Self-awareness theory:** Suggests that certain situations lead us to focus on ourselves and compare ourselves to a standard (Wicklund, 1975)



How is self-esteem determined?

- **Self-awareness trap:** High self-focus can exaggerate discrepancies and temporarily lower self-esteem





What is self-regulation?

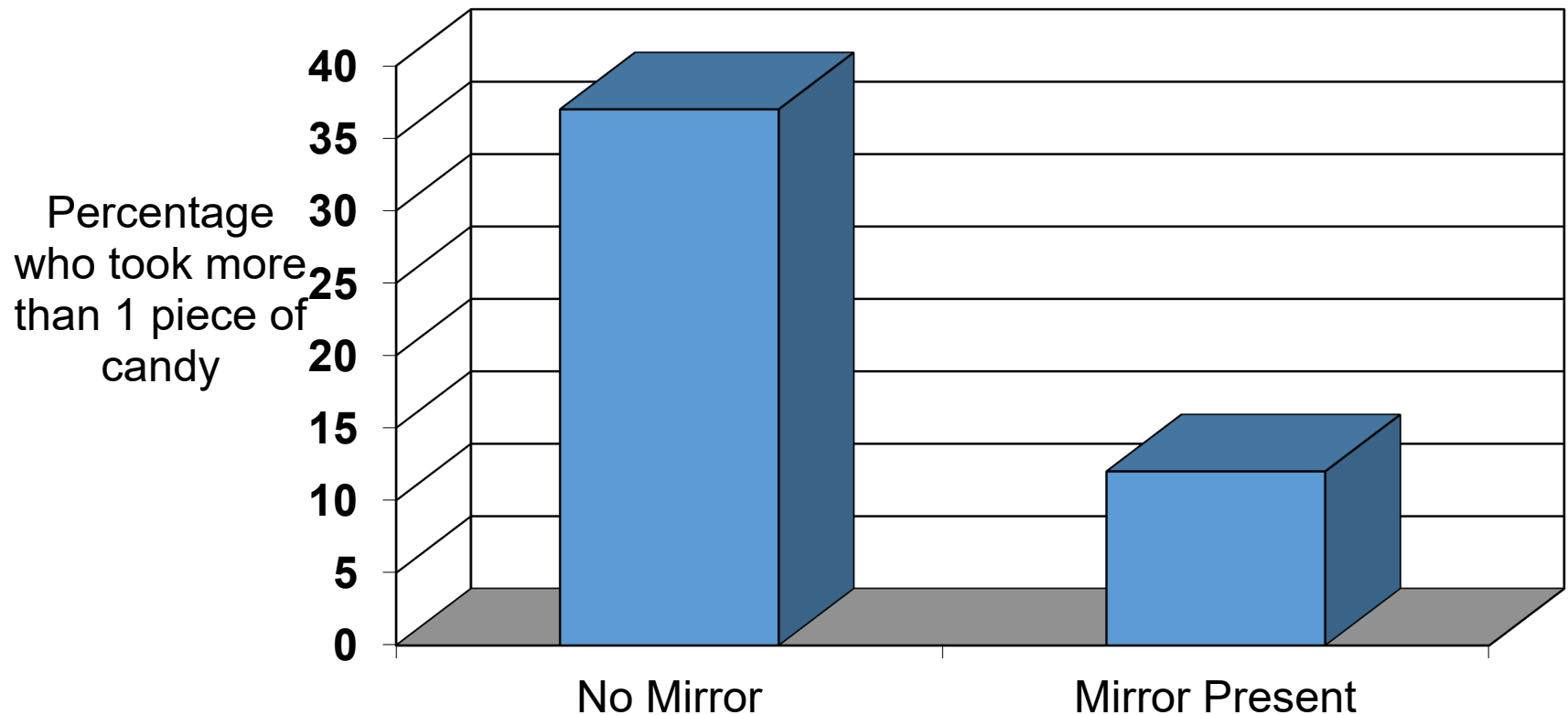
What is self-regulation?

- **Self-regulation:** The process of controlling our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in socially acceptable ways
- Requires self-awareness
- Continuous process
- Constant need
- Limited resource
- Sometimes fails



What is self-regulation?

Beaman et al. (1979)





How do we enhance our self-esteem?

How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- Distort reality with positive illusions
- Can promote mental health, self-confidence, and success
- Can lead to self-defeating behaviors (e.g., poor performance, less likeability)

How do we enhance our self-esteem?

Better-than-average effect

Downward social comparison

Self-handicapping

BIRG

CORF

Implicit egotism

How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- **Better-than-average effect:**
Thinking of ourselves as better than the typical person



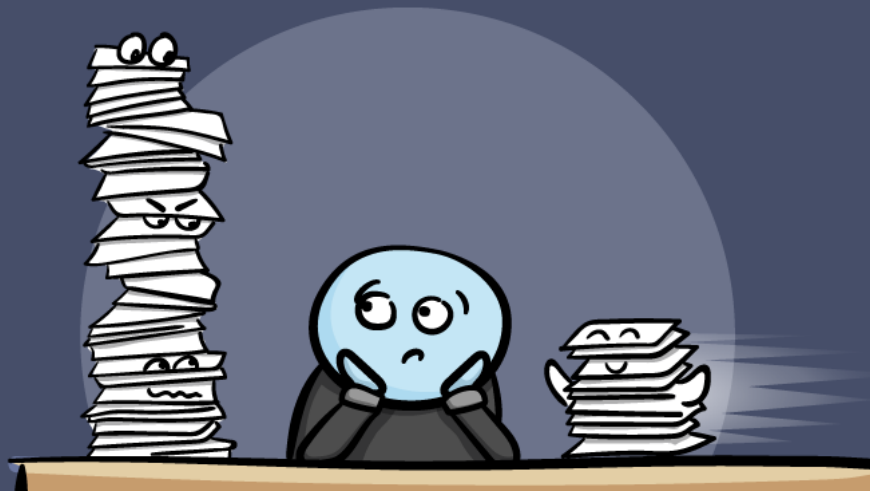
How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- **Downward social comparison:** Comparing ourselves to others who are worse off than us



How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- **Self-handicapping:** Sabotaging our own performance, thereby creating an excuse for failure
 - **Procrastination:** Purposeful delay in finishing something
 - **Sandbagging:** Downplaying ability, lowering expectations, or openly predicting failure



How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- **Basking in reflected glory (BIRG):**
Associating with others who succeed
- **Cutting off reflected failure (CORF):**
Disassociating from others who fail



How do we enhance our self-esteem?

- **Implicit egotism:** Preferring things that we associate with ourselves
- Other self-serving beliefs:
 - Attribute success to ourselves
 - Attribute failure to others or the situation
 - See ourselves as objective and in control
 - Unrealistically optimistic about our future





What is self-presentation?



What is self-
presentation?

- **Self-presentation:** The portrayal of oneself to others
- **Strategic self-presentation:** The process of shaping others' impressions of us

What is self-presentation?

- **Ingratiation:** A technique used to gain acceptance and get along with others
 - E.g., compliment others, discuss common interests, show enthusiasm, and use friendly gestures
- **Self-promotion:** A technique used to gain respect or competence and get ahead
 - E.g., embellish, advertise, take charge, and take credit

What is self-presentation?

- **Self-verification:** The process of shaping impressions so others perceive us in the same way we see ourselves
 - Interact with people who verify our self-concepts
 - Can overwhelm the need for self-enhancement



What is self-presentation?

- **Self-monitoring:** The process of regulating behavior to meet situational demands
 - High self-monitors behave differently across situations
 - Low self-monitors behave consistently across situations



What is self-presentation?

- **Spotlight effect:** Tendency to think others notice us more than they actually do

