



Perception of Others

Discussion Questions

1. What is social perception?
2. How do our observations of the social context impact our perceptions of others?
3. How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?
4. What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?
5. How do we form impressions of others?
6. What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?



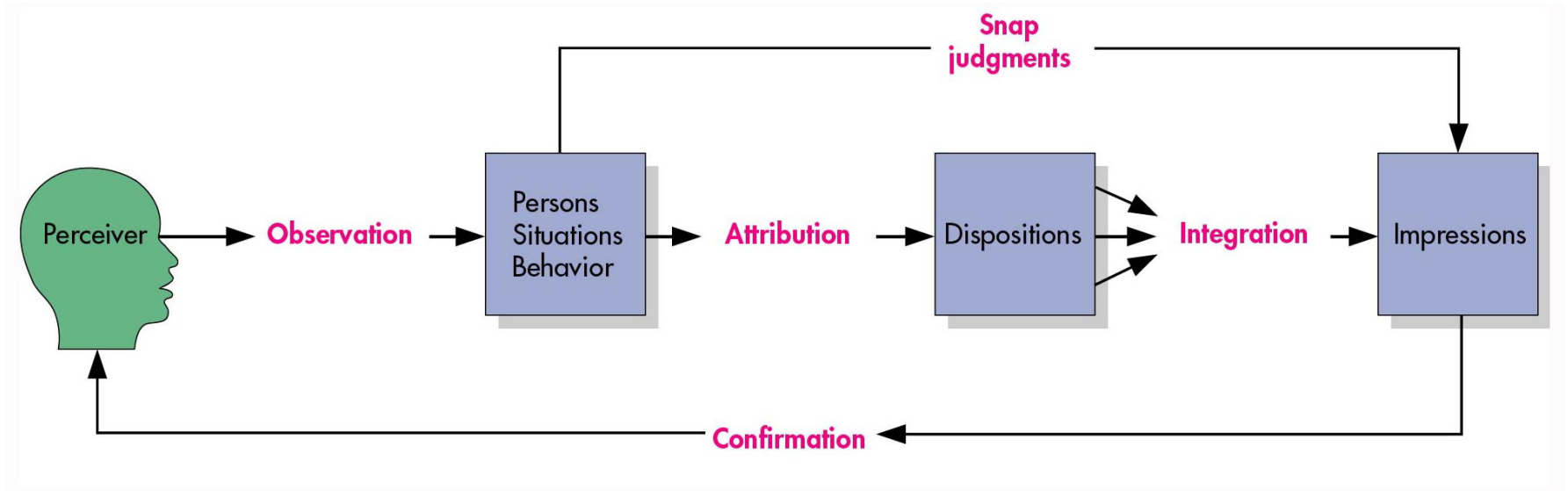
What is social perception?

What is social perception?

- **Social perception:** The process of forming impressions or judgments about other people
 - Observation - Perceiving “raw data”
 - Attribution - Making judgments
 - Integration - Forming impressions
 - Confirmation - Verifying our perceptions



What is social perception?



**How do our observations of
the social context impact our
perceptions of others?**

How do our observations impact our perceptions?

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graph TD; A[Target's personal characteristics] --- B[Target's behaviors]; A --- C[Situational cues]; B --- C;
```

Target's personal characteristics

Target's behaviors

Situational cues

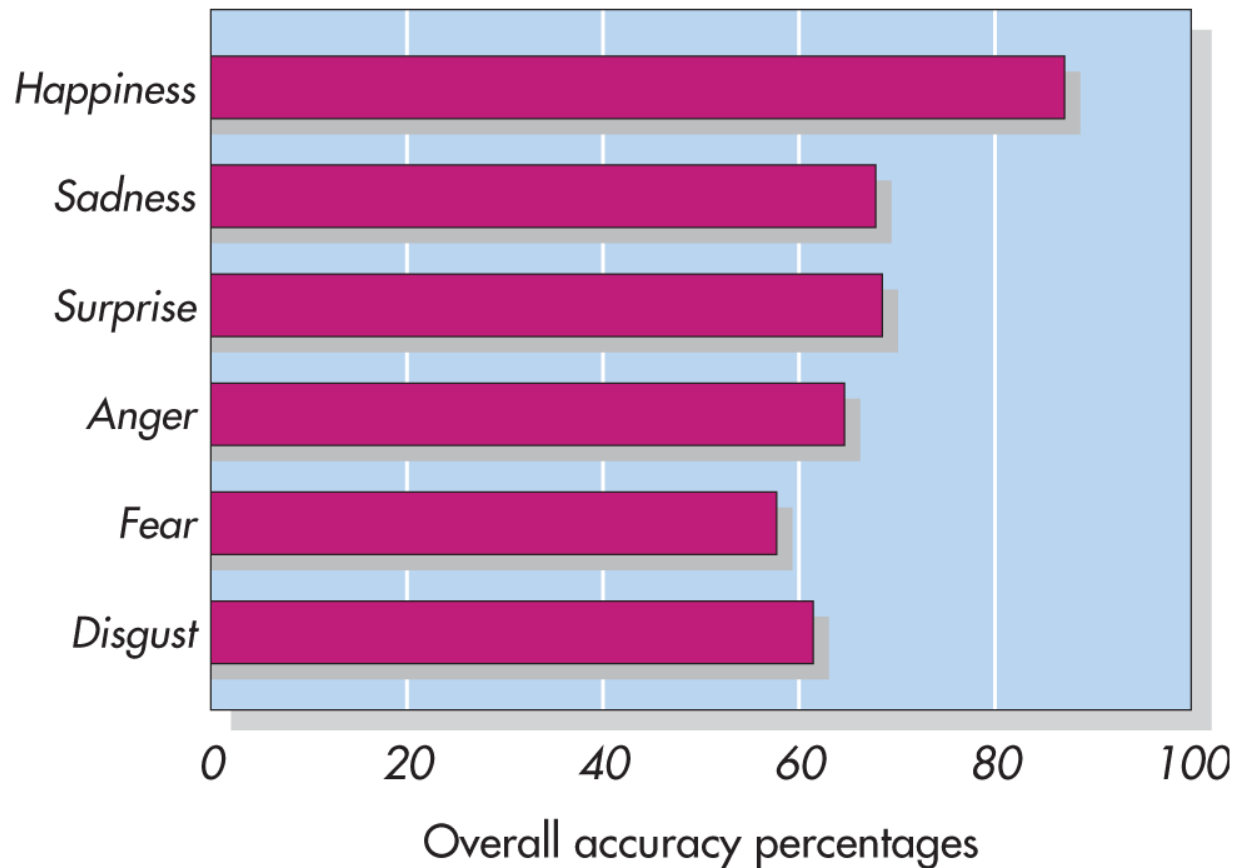
How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Target's personal characteristics used to form quick impressions and make inferences about their traits and behaviors
 - Physical appearance
 - Name
 - Facial features

How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Target's behaviors used to identify their emotions and make inferences about their inner states
 - **Non-verbal behavior:** A behavior that reveals a person's feelings without words
 - Facial expressions (Todorov et al., 2008)
 - In-group accuracy advantage (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002)

How do our observations impact our perceptions?



From H.A. Elfenbein and N. Ambady, "On the Universality and Cultural Specificity of Emotion Recognition: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 128, 2002, pp. 203-235. Reprinted with permission.

How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Survival value of recognizing emotions (Darwin, 1872)
- **Anger superiority effect:**
The tendency to identify angry faces in a crowd more quickly than neutral faces

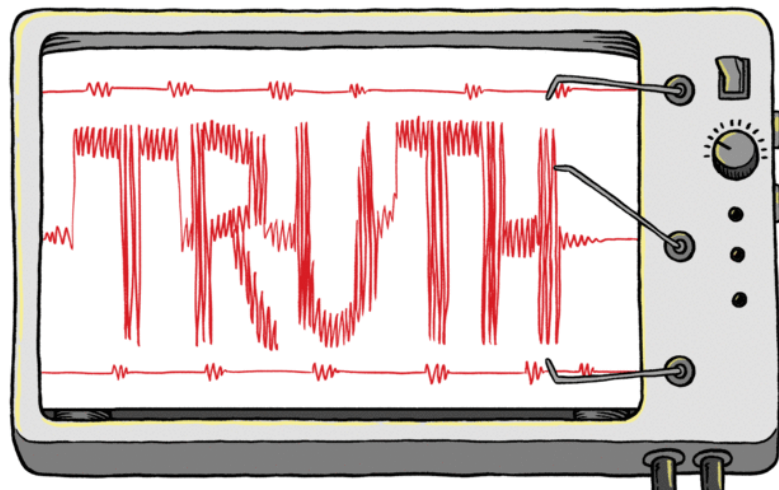


How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Target's behaviors used to identify their emotions and make inferences about their inner states
 - **Non-verbal behavior:** A behavior that reveals a person's feelings without words
 - Facial expressions (Todorov et al., 2008)
 - In-group accuracy advantage (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002)
 - Eye gaze

How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Target's behaviors also used to detect deception
 - 50% probability
 - Focus on the content of the lie, voice pitch, and body movements (not words, eyes, or facial expressions)



How do our observations impact our perceptions?

- Situational cues
- **Cognitive scripts:**
Mental representations of situations
 - Details emerge with experience (Pryor & Merluzzi, 1985)
 - Culture-specific

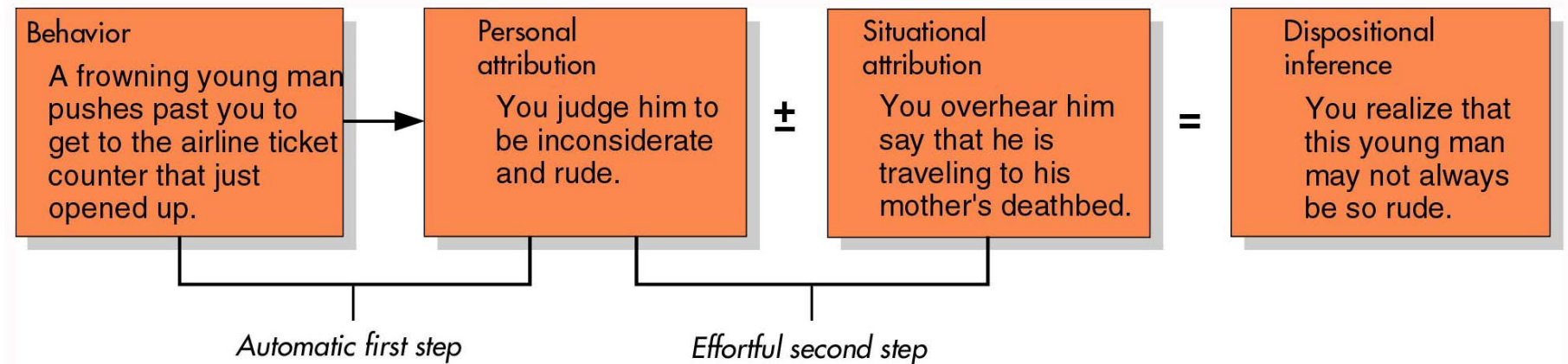




**How do we make attributions
about others' behaviors?**

How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

- **Attribution theory:** Describes the process we use to explain the causes of others' behaviors



How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

- **Personal attribution:** Explains behavior in terms of an individual's personal characteristics
 - Disposition (e.g., traits, character, personality)
 - KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities)
 - Mood
 - Effort

Personal Attribution



How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

- **Situational attribution:** Explains behavior in terms of the situation
 - Task
 - Other people
 - Luck

A high-angle, wide shot of a multi-lane highway during what appears to be dusk or dawn. The road is filled with a dense flow of traffic, including numerous cars, SUVs, and several large commercial trucks. The wet pavement reflects the headlights and taillights of the vehicles, creating a shimmering effect. In the background, an overpass is visible with a sign that reads "White Oak Avenue". A white rectangular box with the text "Situational Attribution" is superimposed over the center of the image.

Situational Attribution

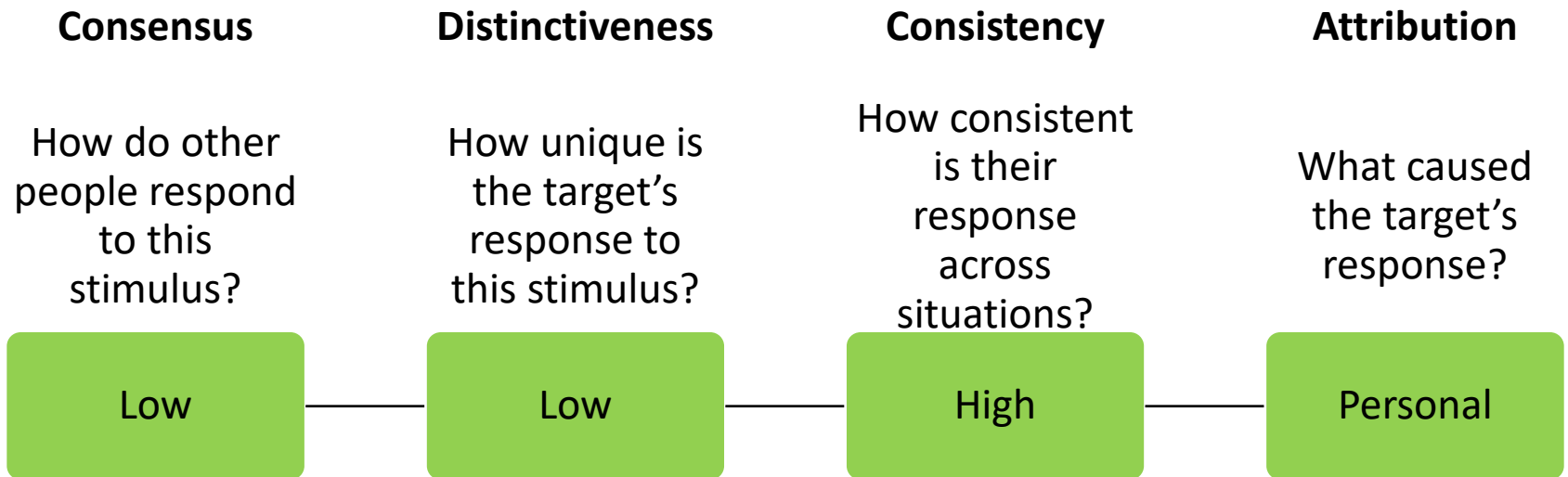
How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

- **Kelley's covariation theory:** Suggests we attribute behavior to causes that are present when the behavior is present and absent when the behavior is absent
 - Use information about consensus, distinctiveness, and consistency

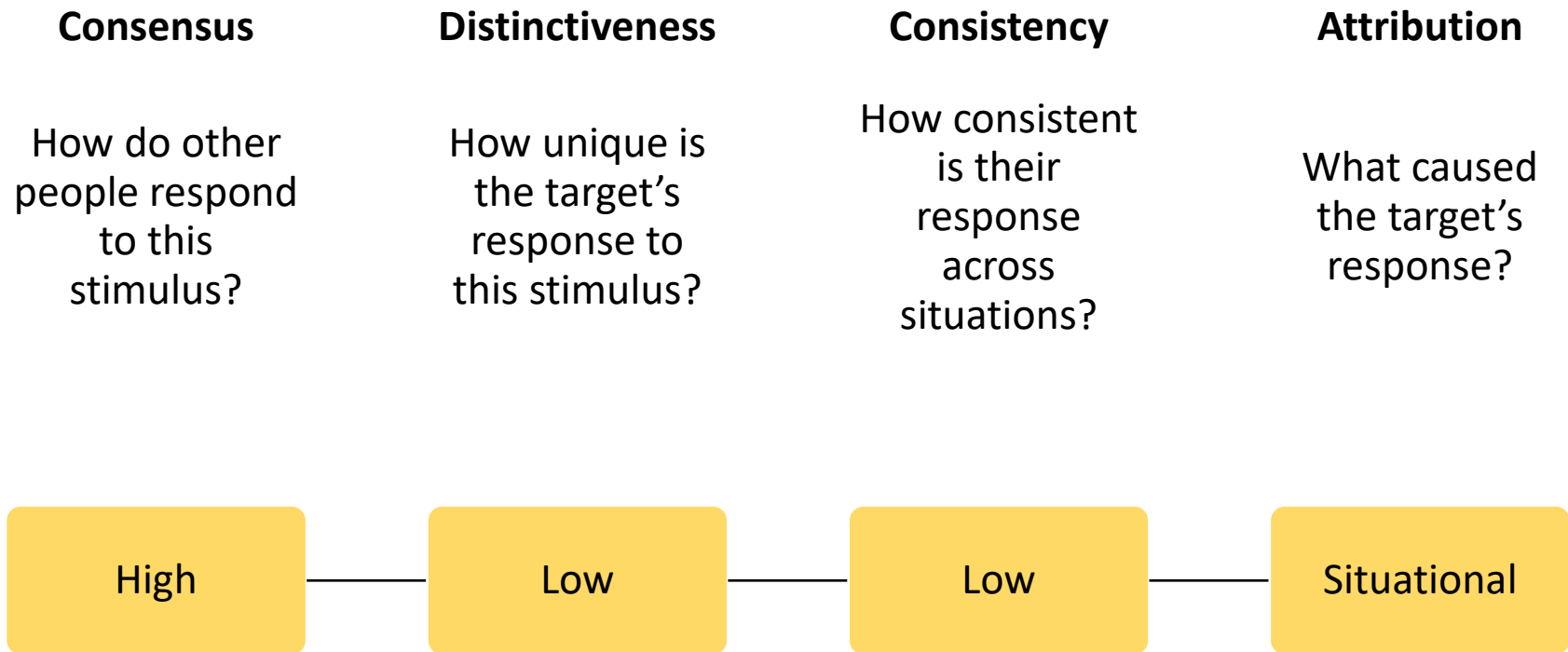
How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

Consensus	Distinctiveness	Consistency	Attribution
How do other people respond to this stimulus?	How unique is the target's response to this stimulus?	How consistent is their response across situations?	What caused the target's response?
Low	Low	High	Personal
High	Low	Low	Situational
High	High	High	Stimulus

How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?



How do we make attributions about others' behaviors?

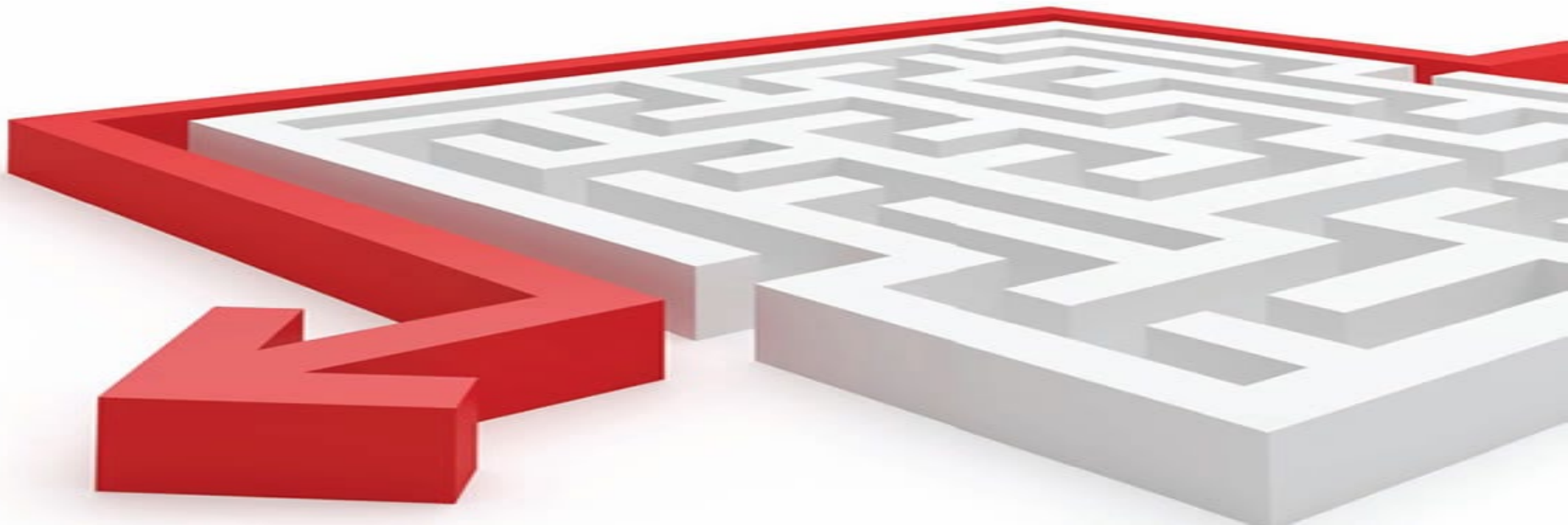




**What attributional biases
impact our judgments of
others?**

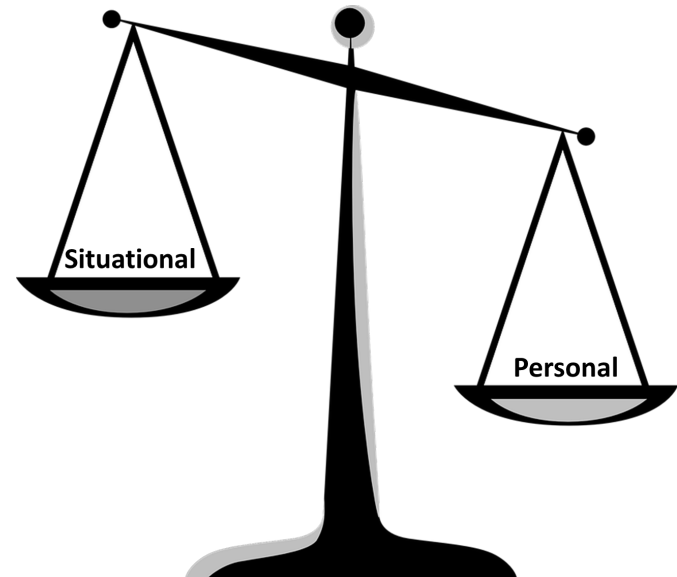
What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Cognitive heuristics:** Mental shortcuts
 - Save time and energy
 - Introduce bias

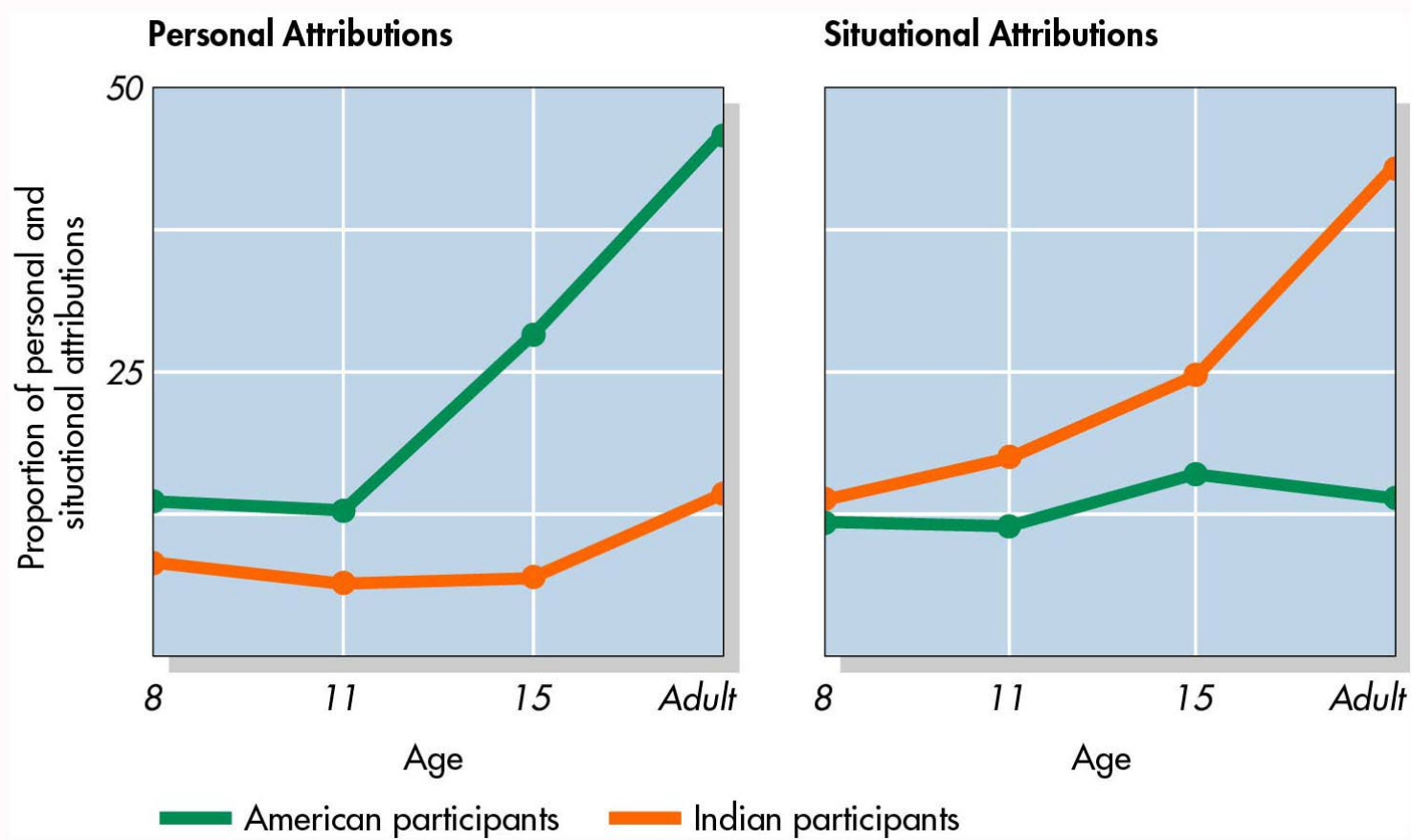


What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Fundamental attribution error:** The tendency to overestimate the role of personal factors and underestimate the role of situational factors in explaining behavior



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?



From J.G. Miller (1984) "Culture and the Development of Everyday Social Explanation," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46, 961-978. Copyright (c) 1984 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

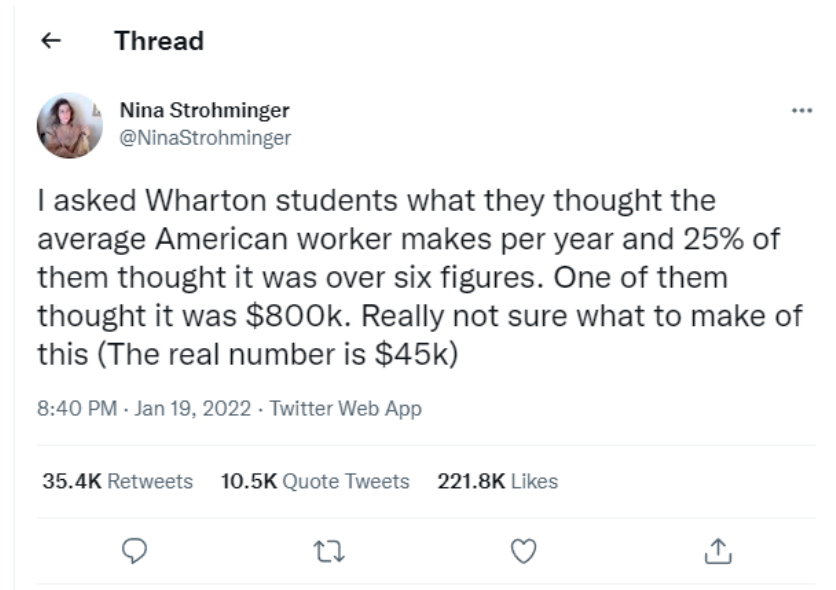
What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Availability heuristic:**
The tendency to estimate the odds that an event will occur by how easily instances of it come to mind



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **False-consensus effect:** The tendency to overestimate how much others share our thoughts and behavior



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Base-rate fallacy:** The tendency to be sensitive to subjective data (especially when relevant and credible) and insensitive to objective data



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Counterfactual thinking:** The tendency to think about “what might have been” and imagine alternative outcomes
 - Negative emotions occur when imagining a better outcome
 - Positive emotions occur when imagining a worse outcome



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

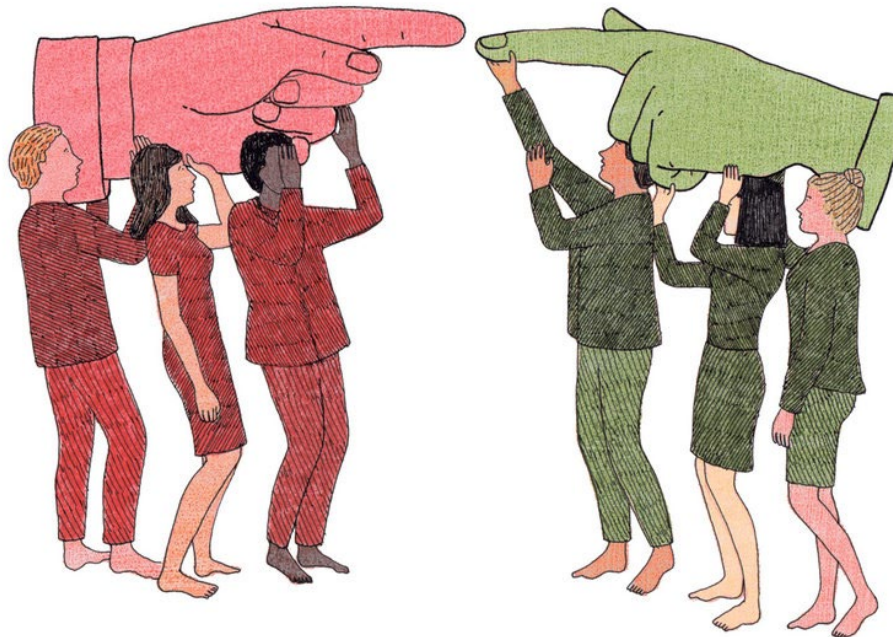
- **Actor-observer bias:** The tendency to make personal attributions for others' behaviors and situational attributions for our behaviors
 - More pronounced with negative outcomes
 - Occurs when judging ours and other's behaviors

☐ **Pass**
☒ **Fail**



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **In-group bias:** The tendency to judge similar others more favorably than different others



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Wishful seeing:** The tendency to see what we want to see
 - Radel & Clement-Guillotin (2012)



What attributional biases impact our judgments of others?

- **Belief in a just world:** The tendency to blame others for their misfortunes because we believe in a just world that punishes bad behavior





**How do we form impressions
of others?**

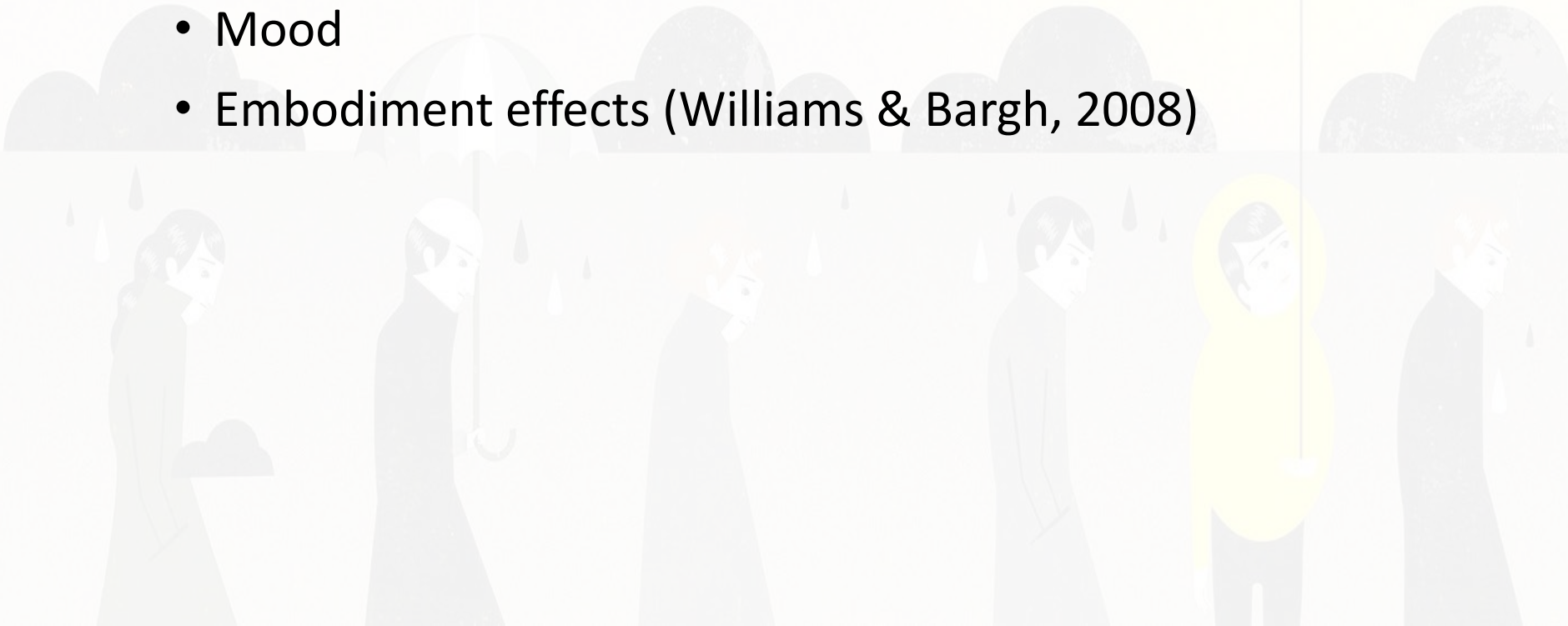
How do we form impressions of others?

- **Impression formation:** The process of integrating information about a person to form an impression
 - **Information integration theory:** Says impressions are influenced by our own characteristics and a *weighted* average of the target's characteristics



How do we form impressions of others?

- Perceiver's characteristics
 - Standard used to judge others
 - Self as frame of reference
 - Mood
 - Embodiment effects (Williams & Bargh, 2008)



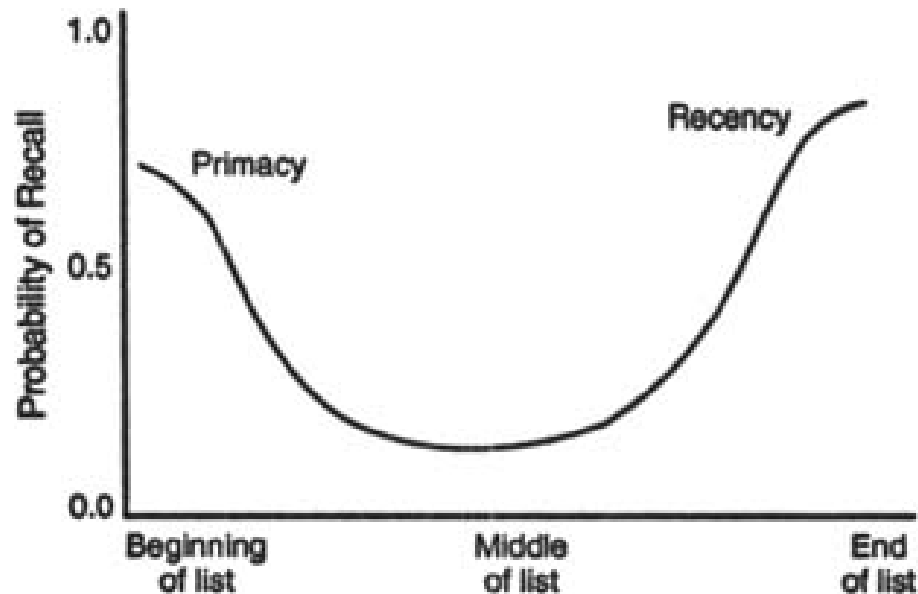
How do we form impressions of others?

- Target's characteristics
 - Observability and valence of the target's traits
 - **Trait negativity bias:** The tendency to weigh negative information more heavily than positive information



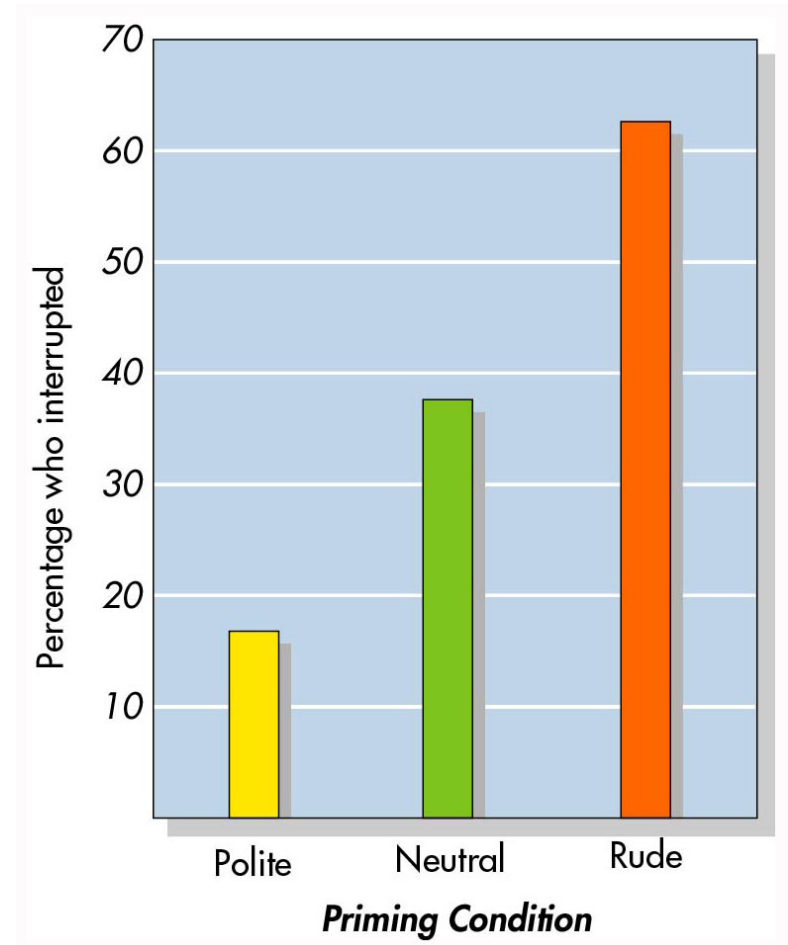
How do we form impressions of others?

- **Primacy effect:** The tendency to be more influenced by information that is presented early in a sequence than information presented later



How do we form impressions of others?

- **Priming effect:** The tendency for recently used or perceived information to come to mind and influence the interpretation of new information



**What confirmation biases
impact our impressions of
others?**

What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?

- **Confirmation bias:** The tendency to attend to information that verifies our beliefs and ignore information that contracts them



What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?



What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?

- **Belief perseverance:**
The tendency to stick to a 1st impression when faced with contradictory information
- **Biased experience sampling:** The tendency to avoid interacting with people who made a negative impression



What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?

- **Expectations effect:** The tendency to see and hear what we expect to see and hear
- **Self-fulfilling prophecy:** The cyclical process by which your expectations of a target lead them to behave in ways that fulfill those expectations
 - AKA Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968)

What confirmation biases impact our impressions of others?

● FIGURE 4.13

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy as a Three-Step Process

How do people transform their expectations into reality? (1) A perceiver has expectations of a target person; (2) the perceiver then behaves in a manner consistent with those expectations; and (3) the target unwittingly adjusts his or her behavior according to the perceiver's actions.

