



Thoughts on Behavior

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[Fundamental Concept]

- Human behavior is determined by the world one perceives.
- Perception is dependent on the acuity of one's five senses.
- Interpretation of perception can be "distorted".
- There are 5 (five) common means of misperception.

[Misperception One]

- The perception of an “act” is determined both by:
 - Our perception of the act itself.
 - The perception of the context in which it occurs.
- Context
 - When unsure of the meaning we reform it around “contexts” that we are familiar with.
 - You must familiarize yourself with the “others” context.
 - Limited contact amplifies distortion.
 - Prolonged, functional and intimate contact diminishes misperception.

[Misperception Two]

- Perception of the external world is:
 - Often indirectly determined by information obtained from others, not by our own direct observation.
 - Understanding another's viewpoint enhances the validity of our own perception of the “others” reality.
- Do research!!!

[Misperception Three]

- Perception is often influenced by the need to:
 - Conform to others.
 - Agree with others .
- Dissent challenges conformity.
 - Challenged beliefs overcome and can improve fixed attitudes.
- Welcome dissent!!!

[Misperception Four]

- Psychological research indicates that:
 - An individual attempts to perceive his/her environment in ways that are congruent (similar) to her/his self perception.
 - *Example: If you feel afraid, then you perceive the world as frightening.*
- Unchallenged congruency (consistency) leads to rigidity and inflexibility.
- Changing perception is threatening but indicative of a mature mind.

Misperception Five

- Mote-beam Mechanism:
 - Perceiving characteristics in others not attributed to ourselves
 - *Example: Seeing yourself in a good light while pointing out the flaws in others.*
 - This tendency exaggerates negative behavior in others while not challenging the same behavior in ourselves.
- Do not condemn others behavior without understanding the context of its existence.

Causes of Distortion

- We become heavily invested in the effort needed to maintain a mistaken (distorted) “fixed” belief.
- Distorted perceptions remain unchallenged when we avoid interacting with the cause of distortion.
- Overcoming distorted beliefs are facilitated by building trust and mutuality.
- TALK to other people...LISTEN to what they say!!!

[Reference]

- Extracted from:

McKinney, F.(1973). Psychology in action: Basic readings. *Chapter 13: Morton Deutsch, Psychological Alternatives to War*. New York: The Macmillan Company. Pp. 117-133.