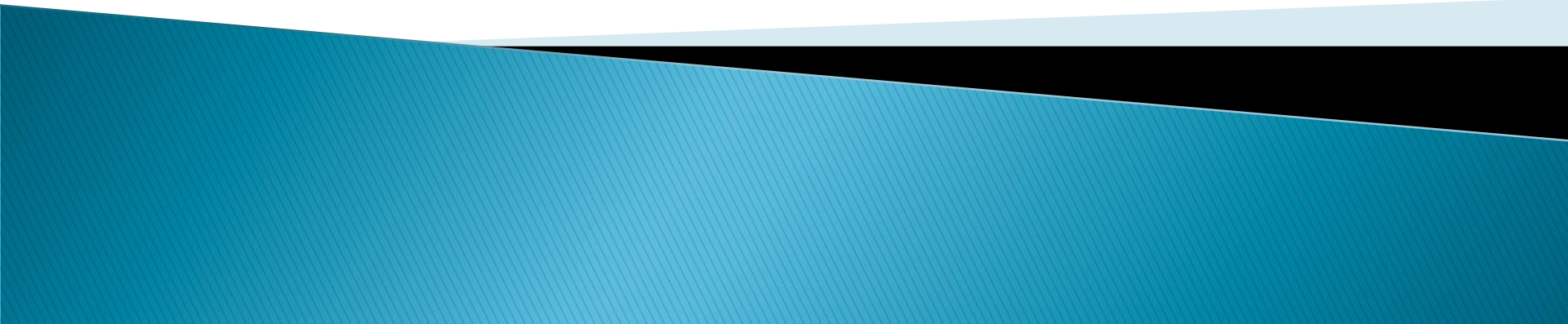


Michael and Suzanne hold the **same** position on tuition raise. They were told to give speeches advocating higher tuition. Michael was given 50 CZK and Suzanne was given 1000 CZK for doing that.

What do you think who is more likely to accept higher tuition now?



Cognitive Dissonance Theory





Mrs. Marian Keech & Great flood prophecy



Festinger, L., Riecken, H. W., & Schachter, S. (1956).
When Prophecy Fails. New York: Harper & Row.

Bob



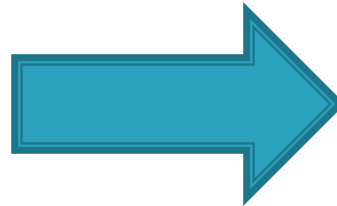
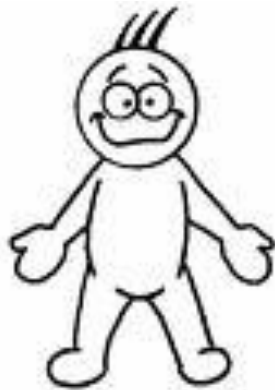
I want to be **muscular!** I'll work out more!

After 4 months of work out



I am strong and muscular

PLAN



I have healthy lifestyle

REALITY



What has happened in all of these examples?

Cognitive dissonance has occurred



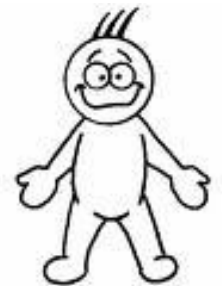
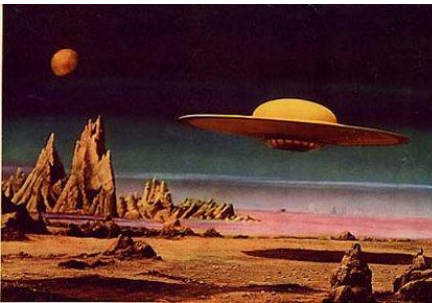
Cognitive dissonance

- ▶ Cognitive = involving thinking
- ▶ Dissonance = disharmony, discord
- ▶ Cognition* = beliefs, attitudes, behavior

* (in this context)

Cognitive dissonance = unpleasant state that occurs whenever a person holds two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent

This unpleasant state is highly motivational. It drives us toward reducing the dissonance.



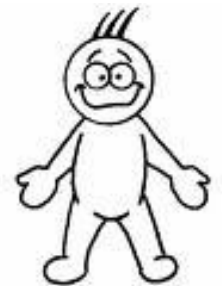
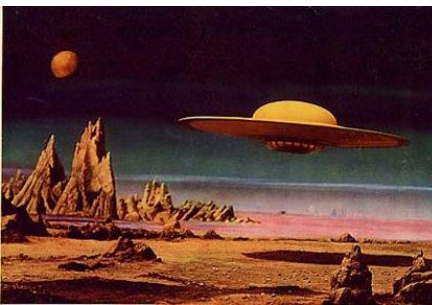
Cognitive dissonance

Question:

Who thinks that people are rational animals?

Answer:

We are not **rational** animals. We are **rationalizing** animals.



Cognitive Dissonance Theory

- ▶ The presence of a cognitive inconsistency of sufficient magnitude will evoke an aversive motivational state – dissonance – that drives cognitive work aimed at reducing the cognitive inconsistency. (Festinger, 1957)
- ▶ Magnitude = $\frac{\textit{number of Dis/Con}}{\textit{psychological importance of Dis/Con}}$
- ▶ The routes of dissonance reduction:
 - Subtracting dissonant cognitions
 - Adding consonant cognitions
 - Decreasing the importance of dissonant cognitions
 - Increasing the importance of consonant cognitions



Research has shown that dissonance processes can:

- ▶ Reduce prejudices

(Leippe & Eisenstadt, 1994)



- ▶ Increase water conservation

(Dickerson, Thibodeau, Aronson, & Miller, 1992)



- ▶ Increase the purchasing of condoms

(Stone, Aronson, Crain, Winslow, & Fried, 1994)



- ▶ Reduce hunger and thirst

(Brehm, 1962)



- ▶ Reduce pain

(Zimbardo, Cohen, Weisenberg, Dworkin, & Firestone, 1969)



... they can also lead to changes in attitudes toward a variety of objects and issues such as:

▶ **Boring tasks**

(Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959)

▶ **Delicious chocolate**

(Harmon-Jones, Brehm, Greenberg, Simon, & Nelson, 1996)

▶ **Eating grasshoppers**

(Zimbardo, Weisenberg, Firestone, & Levy, 1965)

▶ **Sour beverages made with vinegar**

(Harmon-Jones et al., 1996)

▶ **Increasing tuition at one's university**

(Elliot & Devine, 1994)

▶ **Mandatory comprehensive final exams**

(Simon, Greenberg, & Brehm, 1995)

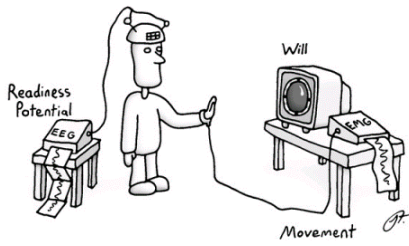
The Korean War



- ▶ Attitude change in American POWs* in Chinese camps

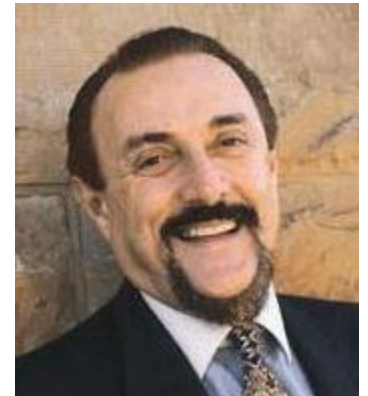
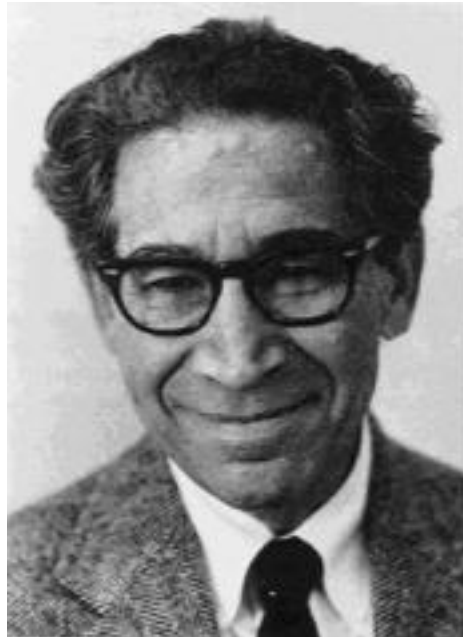
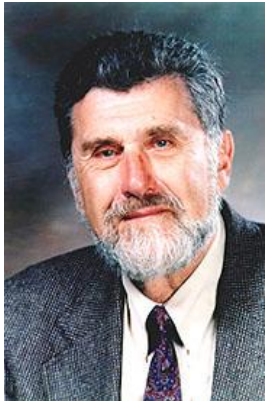


* Prisoner of war



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Classic Experiments and What Can We Learn From Them



JUSTIFYING UNTRUTHS

- ▶ (Festinger, Carlsmith, 1959)
 - **“The boring task” experiment**

Subjects received \$1 or \$20 reward for lying about enjoyableness of the task

How enjoyable were tasks?
(rated from -5 to +5)

Were tasks scientifically important?
(rated from 0 to +10)

Are you willing to participate in
similar experiments?
(rated from -5 to +5)

	\$1	\$20	Control
How enjoyable were tasks? (rated from -5 to +5)	1.35	-.05	-.45
Were tasks scientifically important? (rated from 0 to +10)	6.45	5.18	5.60
Are you willing to participate in similar experiments? (rated from -5 to +5)	1.20	-.25	-.62

Justifying untruths

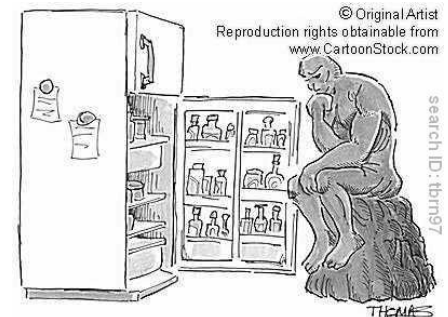


Counterattitudinal advocacy

JUSTIFYING DIFFICULT DECISIONS

- ▶ (Brehm, 1956)
 - “You can keep one toaster” experiment
- 1. Women rated toasters
- 2. Then given chance to take one of them
- 3. Suddenly...
 - ... the chosen toaster is way better
 - ... the unchosen toasters are way worse

Postdecisional spreading of alternatives



JUSTIFYING EFFORT



- ▶ (Aronson, Mills, 1959)
 - “Petting vs. erection initiation” experiment
- ▶ Women joined the sex discussion group via easy OR hard “initiation process”. Then they heard boring presentation. The “hard initiation group” members reported more positive attitudes toward the discussion group.
- ▶ The power of rites of passage



JUSTIFYING A FAILURE TO ACT

- ▶ (Aronson, Carlsmith, 1963)
 - “Severe vs. mild punishment for playing with a forbidden toy” experiment
- ▶ Children prohibited from playing with an attractive toy by a mild threat subsequently found the toy less attractive than did children prohibited by a severe threat.
- ▶ Practical application:
“Good boy vs. Bad boy framing”

Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance = unpleasant state that occurs whenever a person holds two cognitions that are psychologically inconsistent

- ▶ Attitude change in American POW's in Korean War
- ▶ Stan's Oldsmobile
- ❖ Justifying untruths
- ❖ Justifying difficult decisions
- ❖ Justifying effort
- ❖ Justifying failure to act
- ❖ *Counterattitudinal advocacy*
- ❖ *Postdecisional spreading*