Self-Handicapping: *How we use attributions to protect ourselves… in a bad way.*

- Fear failure?
- Unsure of prior success?
- Self-handicap; that way, no one will think you aren’t naturally intelligent or untalented.
Attitudes

• An evaluative reaction to something or someone (called, an attitude-object) that is exhibited in one’s beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior.

• Three components
  – Affect (Feelings)
  – Behavior (Intentions)
  – Cognition (Beliefs)

• Changing attitudes: Persuasion (Chapter 7)

Do Attitudes Predict Behavior?

• LaPierre (1934): The attitude-behavior problem.
  – In a classic study, LaPierre (1934) drove through the U.S. with a Chinese couple. They stopped at over 250 restaurants and hotels and were refused service only once. Several months later, the owners were surveyed on whether they would serve Chinese people. The response was overwhelmingly negative. 92 percent of those surveyed said that they would not. In this case, clearly, their behavior gave less evidence of racial bias than their expressed attitudes did.
  – Different time…about six months later.
  – Different people
  – Chinese couple spoke flawless English; accompanied by Stanford professor.

• Nevertheless, subsequent research did show that in some cases, attitudes did not predict behaviors.
  – Example: Busing

• Self-erasing predictions: Do you intend to vote?
When Do Attitudes Predict Behavior?

• When you ask for specific attitudes rather than general ones.
  – Wicker: Yosemite Park and littering
• When you sample across many behaviors.
• When you ask a low-self-monitor
• When situational forces are not so strong.
• When you aren’t asked to explain your attitude.

Does Behavior Determine Attitudes?

• Role playing
  – Zimbardo’s Prison Study (1971)
• Wells & Petty (1980):
  – Testing headphones
• The foot-in-the-door effect
• Evil acts and attitudes
  – Treatment of inmates
  – Ostracism confederates
Why Do Actions Affect Attitudes?

- Self-presentation theory
  - Inconsistency looks bad to others.
  - We express attitudes that make us appear consistent with our behavior.

- Cognitive dissonance theory
  - Inconsistency feels bad to us.
  - We justify our actions by changing our attitudes to fit what we did/said.

- Self-perception theory
  - Our actions are self-revealing