



# Chapter 3

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**Communication in Our Lives, 5th Edition**  
by Julia T. Wood

# Defining Perception

- Perception is an *active* process of *selecting, organizing, and interpreting* people, objects, events, situations, and activities



# Selection

- Selection is influenced by
  - external qualities that draw attention
  - the acuity of our senses
  - change
  - our mo
  - expect



# Self-fulfilling Prophecy

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- People act in ways consistent with how they have learned to perceive themselves
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# Organization

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- Prototypes
  - Personal Constructs
  - Stereotypes
  - Scripts
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# Prototypes

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- Knowledge structures that define the best or most representative example of some category

**Who is your prototype for friend, teacher, or romantic partner?**

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# Personal Constructs

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- Mental yardsticks that allow us to position people and situations along bipolar dimensions of judgment
    - intelligent—not intelligent
    - responsible—not responsible
    - kind—not kind
    - attractive—not attractive
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# Stereotypes

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- Predictive generalizations about people and situations
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What stereotypes do you have of the men in this photograph?

Can you identify the basis of your stereotype(s)?

What would change your stereotypes?

# Scripts

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- Guides to action based on what we've experienced and observed (help organize)
    - For example: You have a script for greeting casual acquaintances
      - “Hey, how ya doing?”
      - “Fine, see ya around.”
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# Interpretation

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- The subjective process of explaining perceptions to assign meaning to them
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# Attributions

- Explanations of why things happen and why people act as they do

**Table 2.1**

**Dimensions of Interpersonal Attributions**

Locus:	Internal	External
Stability:	Stable	Unstable
Scope:	Global	Specific
Responsibility:	Within personal control	Beyond personal control

# The Self-Serving Bias

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- The tendency to construct attributions that serve our personal interests
    - **Internal, stable, global attributions for success**
      - Good results come from personal control
    - **External, unstable, specific attributions for failures**
      - Negative results come from external influences
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# Influences on Perception

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- **Physiology**
    - **People differ in sensory abilities and physiologies**
  
  - **Culture**
    - **A system of beliefs, values, understandings, practices, and ways of interpreting experience that are shared by a number of people**
  
    - **Standpoint theory**
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# Influences on Perception (cont'd)

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- Social Roles
    - **Some messages tell us what roles we are expected to fulfill, as well as the actual demands of those roles**
  - doctor
  - student
  - teacher
  - parent
  - child
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# Influences on Perception (cont'd)

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- Cognitive Abilities - How elaborately we think about situations and people
    - **Cognitive complexity**
    - **Person-centered perception**
      - Not the same as EMPATHY
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# Enhancing Competence

Most abstract



Action      Avoid interacting with Andrea.

Judgment      Andrea is a selfish and immature person.

Label      Andrea is taking more than her share of time.

Perception      Andrea asks a lot of questions during the meeting.

Total concrete reality      Andrea is nervous, has academic difficulties, and worries about making a good grade in the course.

Most concrete

# Enhancing Competence (cont'd)

- Recognize that all perceptions are subjective
- Avoid mind reading
- Check perceptions with others
- Distinguish between facts and inferences
- Monitor the self-serving bias



# Textbook WebLinks

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- 2.1: [Answers.com: Self-fulfilling Prophecy](#)
  - 2.2: [Institute of General Semantics](#)
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# Websites

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- [PBS Global Connections: The Middle East](#)
    - Typical misperceptions and stereotypes Westerners hold about Islam and the Middle East, and vice versa
  - [U.S. Census Bureau homepage](#)
  - [Types of Love](#)
    - Discusses the prototypes we use to make sense of the category we call “Love”
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