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SWK 256/586 Interpersonal Communication Skills

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Learning Objectives Activity 4.1

		PERSON A	PERSON B
Identify each person. Describe your opinions.		Martin had a professional appearance, was funny, intelligent, arrogant, materialistic, selfish, and had condescending behavior toward black people.	Jenifer is a great mom and grandmother. She is wise, caring, Spiritual, loyal, and a loving person.
1. We judge ourselves more charitably than others.		When Martin spoke negatively about black people, it upset me. Although some of the things he said have some validity, I would not have spoken with such contempt.	When I first met Jenifer, I thought she was straightforward, homey, and plain. Later, she shared with me how she loves to dance, wear mini skirts, and how she used to party every weekend. I was surprised because she didn't strike me as the type of person she described

<p>2. We pay more attention to others' negative characteristics.</p>		<p>Martin was well-dressed, intelligent, hilarious, and articulate, but his arrogance irritated me, putting a damper on the relationship. I focused more on his negative characteristics than his positive ones.</p>	<p>Jenifer is a great mom, but she spoils her grown sons and treats them like big babies. My opinion of her has not changed, but I sometimes focus more on how she is babying her adult boys than how great a mother she is to them.</p>
<p>3. We are influenced by the obvious.</p>		<p>My first encounter with Martin was hilarious. He has a comical sense of humor, and he enjoys making people laugh, and he also enjoys putting others down, and I noticed that more than his Sense of humor.</p>	<p>Because Jenifer is my friend and we spend a lot of time together, I probably notice how she gives up all herself to her boys more than I should.</p>
<p>4. We cling to first impressions.</p>		<p>My first impression of Martin was valid, but there was so much more to him than I realized. Martin was a complex guy, and I cling to his first impression.</p>	<p>Jenifer likes to keep things simple; she enjoys being home to help raise her grandchildren and wants to be plain in her appearance. Even though she lives a simple lifestyle, her life experiences have influenced my opinion of her.</p>

5. We tend to assume that others are similar to us.		I assumed that Martin was like me, and in some ways, we were similar in the way we dressed, spoke, and we both enjoyed laughing, but we also had a lot of differences.	I assumed that Jennifer was different than I was but come to find out; we are a lot similar. I thought that we did not have the same interest and that she would find me too fancy or too experienced.
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CONCLUSION

Based on the observations above, how do you think these influences on perception affect your understanding and attitudes about other people?

I believe that perception can cause you to misjudge a person. The first impression could be correct, but it can also be wrong. I learned that physical makeup could influence perception and affect my understanding and attitudes about other people who may have grown up in the same culture or different cultures but have different perceptions, affecting their knowledge and attitudes about their experiences with people.

Martin had a different perception of black people than I had. He believed that black people did not want a better life, and I know there was much more to it than that. According to the textbook 'Many factors affect the way we select, organize, interpret, and negotiate information. Access to information plays an important role. So do physiological factors such as our senses, age, and health. Cultural background also influences the way we view the world, as

do social roles. In addition to these factors, some common tendencies affect the way we assign meaning to others' behaviors.'

Reflecting on your observations, which influences on perception are the most apt to provide you with inaccurate perception?

Reflecting on my observations, the influences on the perception that would be the most apt to provide me with inaccurate perception is first impressions. According to the textbook, Incorrect first impression "Problems arise when the labels we attach are inaccurate. After we form an opinion of someone, we tend to hang on to it and make any conflicting information fit our opinion." I hung on to what I first thought about Martin, probably because I was partially right about him.

When I witnessed how he viewed people and how he lacked empathy for others, I was disappointed. Sometimes having positive first impressions of a person and negative beliefs outweigh the good your expectations for that person can leave you dispirited.

What might you do in the future to guard against inaccurate perceptions of people?

In the future, to guard against inaccurate perception, I will apply the four-step perception process, which gives me the ability to organize my perception and function.

1. **Selection** - Several factors cause us to notice some things and ignore others
2. **Organization** - Organize our impressions of other communicators using a number of schemes (called perceptual schema by social scientists). Sometimes we classify people

according to their appearance: male or female, beautiful or ugly, heavy or thin, young or old, etc.

3. **Interpretation** - Once selected and organized our perception, we interpret the information we've collected and sorted.

- Degree of involvement with the other person
- The assumption about another person
- Attitudes
- Expectations
- Knowledge...
- Self-concept
- Relational satisfaction

Negotiate - Sense-making occurs between and among people as they influence one another's perceptions and try to achieve a shared perspective.