

## CHAPTER 13

### THE SELF-REGULATION PERSPECTIVE

#### CHAPTER OUTLINE

##### From Cognition to Behavior

- Intentions
- Goals
- Goal Setting
- Implementation Intentions and the Importance of Strategies
- Deliberative and Implemental Mindsets

##### Self-Regulation and Feedback Control

- Feedback Control
- Self-Directed Attention and the Action of the Comparator
- Mental Contrasting and Goal Matching
- Hierarchical Organization
- Issues Concerning Hierarchical Organization
- Evidence of Hierarchical Organization
- Construal Levels
- Emotions
- Effects of Expectancies: Effort versus Disengagement
- Partial Disengagement

##### Further Themes in Self-Regulation

- Approach and Avoidance
- Intention-Based and Stimulus-Based Action
- Self-Regulation as Self-Control

##### Assessment

- Assessment of Self-Regulatory Qualities
- Assessment of Goals

##### Problems in Behavior, and Behavior Change

- Problems as Conflicts among Goals and Lack of Strategy Specifications
- Problems from an Inability to Disengage
- Self-Regulation and the Process of Therapy
- Therapy Is Training in Problem Solving

##### The Self-Regulation Perspective: Problems and Prospects

##### Summary

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

In self-regulation models, behavior is sometimes specified by interpretive schemas, if an interpretation is closely tied to an action quality. Sometimes actions follow from intentions. *Intentions* are products of a mental algebra in which personally desired outcomes and social considerations are weighed to yield an intent to act or not act.

Theory concerning self-regulation emphasizes *goals*. The goals underlying behavior have a variety of labels, including *life tasks*, *personal strivings*, *personal projects*, and *current concerns*. This view treats the structure of the self as an organization among goals. Some goals are fairly neutral, but others imply a standard of excellence. In the latter case, setting higher goals results in higher performances. This is because committing oneself to a more demanding goal focuses one's efforts more fully. If the goal is too high, though, people don't adopt it.

Some intentions concern attaining end goals; others are about implementing action plans to reach those end goals. The latter are important for ensuring that behavior actually gets done. Implementation intentions constitute linking of strategies to the contexts in which the person wants to engage them. Intentions are formed in a deliberative mindset, but once the person starts to pursue them, the person is in an implementational mindset.

Once a goal for behavior has been evoked, *self-regulation* reflects a process of feedback control. A reference value (or goal) is compared against present behavior. If the two differ, behavior is adjusted, leading to a new perception and comparison. Given that many goals are dynamic and evolving, this view emphasizes that self-regulation is a never-ending process. A single feedback loop is too simple to account for the diversity in people's actions alone, but complexity is provided by the fact that feedback systems can be organized in a hierarchy, in which one system acts by providing reference values to the system directly below it. The concept of hierarchy accounts for the fact that a goal can be attained by many kinds of actions, and also the fact that the same action can occur in service to diverse goals.

Emotions have been viewed within this framework as calls for reprioritizing one's goals. Emotions are viewed as giving a subjective reading of how well you're progressing toward a goal. Emotions thus convey important information that has a strong influence on behavior.

When people encounter obstacles in their efforts, self-regulation is interrupted and the people consider whether success or failure is likely. If expectancies are positive enough, the person will keep trying; if not, the person may disengage effort and give up. Disengagement is sometimes the adaptive response, but people sometimes give up too quickly. Sometimes disengagement is only partial—goal substitution or scaling back. This keeps the person engaged, in one way, while disengaging in another.

Although much of this chapter concerns conformity to goals, self-regulation models also include discussions of avoidance. *Avoidance* means creating distance instead of conformity. Another issue is that some behavior occurs via intentions but some actions are triggered fairly automatically, even without the person's awareness. This difference between sources of influence is sometimes dealt with by dual-process models resembling those discussed in Chapter 12. An *intuitive* system promotes behaviors that are triggered by cues of the moment; a *rational* system promotes behaviors that are thought out and intentional. Self-regulation sometimes entails self-control: the prevention of pursuing one goal, in service to another more important goal.

Assessment, from this view, is partly a matter of assessing individual differences in self-regulatory functions, such as self-reflectiveness, self-control, or the level of abstraction at which people view their goals. This view also suggests the value of assessing goals themselves. There are several ways to conceptualize problems from this view. One possibility focuses on conflict between incompatible goals; another points to a lack of specification of midlevel behavioral reference values to guide behavior. Another emphasizes that people sometimes are unable to disengage from behaviors that are necessary for the attainment of higher-order goals. There's evidence that people who are depressed display an exaggerated inability to disengage.

Just as behavior can be construed in terms of self-regulatory systems, so can be the process of behavior change induced by therapy. People in therapy use feedback from decisions they've put into practice to make further decisions. They monitor the effects of changes in behavior to determine whether the changes have produced the desired effects. One long-term goal of therapy is to make people better problem solvers through techniques such as *means-end analysis*, so that they can make their own adjustments when confronting new problems.

## KEY TERMS

Action identification: The way one thinks of or labels whatever action one is performing.

Attitude: A personal evaluation of the likely outcome of an action and the desirability of that outcome.

Comparator: A mechanism that compares two values to each other.

Deliberative mindset: A careful mindset that is used while deciding whether to take an action.

Disengage: To cease and put aside self-regulation with regard to some goal.

Feedback hierarchy: An organization of feedback loops, in which superordinate loops act by providing reference values to subordinate loops.

Goal intention: The intention to attain some particular outcome.

Homeostasis: Regulation around a constant steady state.

Implemental mindset: A positively biased mindset used while implementing an intention to act.

Implementation intention: The intention to take specific actions in specific contexts.

Means–end analysis: The process of creating a plan to attain an overall goal (end) by breaking it into successively more-concrete goals (means).

Negative feedback loop: A self-regulating system that maintains conformity to some comparison value.

Principle: A broad, abstract action quality that could be displayed in any of several programs.

Program: A guideline for the actions that take place in some category of events (as a script).

Subjective norm: A person's impression of how relevant others value an action and your interest in pleasing them.

Subliminal stimuli: Stimuli presented too quickly to be consciously recognized.

System concept: A very abstract guide for behavior, such as an ideal sense of self.

## TEST ITEMS

### Multiple Choice

- (b/316) 1. Neurons that are active both when an action is being watched and when the action is being performed are called:
- mimicry neurons.
  - mirror neurons.
  - reflective neurons.
  - dual-process neurons.
- (a/316) 2. According to Ajzen and Fishbein, forming a strong intention to do a particular behavior occurs when:
- both attitude and subjective norm are very positive.
  - both attitude and subjective norm are very negative.
  - attitude is positive and subjective norm is negative.
  - attitude is negative and subjective norm is positive.
- (d/317) 3. What other people think about what you want to do and how much their opinion matters merge to form:
- your self-impression.
  - an attitude.
  - a behavioral norm.
  - a subjective norm.
- (a/318) 4. Research indicates that setting more difficult goals for oneself:
- results in higher performance.
  - is likely to result in earlier withdrawal of effort.
  - leads to lower performance than the goal of "doing your best."
  - all of the above
- (a/319) 5. If a person is assigned a totally unrealistic goal, he/she:
- is unlikely to adopt that goal.
  - will try hard to achieve the goal, but probably fail.
  - will substitute a more realistic goal.
  - will become very anxious.

- (c/319) 6. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ intention is the intent to attain some particular outcome as an end;  
a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ intention deals with how that end will be attained.
- a. ends, action
  - b. thought, action
  - c. goal, implementation
  - d. thought, implementation
- (d/320) 7. Forming an intention to act involves a(n):
- a. decisive mindset.
  - b. automatic mindset.
  - c. implemental mindset.
  - d. deliberative mindset.
- (c/321) 8. A feedback loop requires all of the following EXCEPT a:
- a. reference value.
  - b. comparator.
  - c. goal regulator.
  - d. perception of current behavior.
- (c/321  
Box13.1) 9. Bandura argued that \_\_\_\_\_ is crucial to self-regulation:
- a. objective rewards
  - b. social rewards
  - c. self-rewards
  - d. the presence of others
- (d/321  
Box13.1) 10. According to Tolman:
- a. reward and punishment are not essential to learning.
  - b. the information provided by reward and punishment is an important aspect of learning.
  - c. reward and punishment draw attention to relevant aspects of a learning situation.
  - d. all of the above
- (c/322) 11. The feedback loop idea has the implication that:
- a. self-regulation is a discontinuous process.
  - b. self-regulation does not rely on inputs to the system.
  - c. behavior is purposeful.
  - d. all of the above

- (b/323) 12. Which of the following describes the relation between self-directed attention and regulation around the reference value?
- a. Self-directed attention does not influence regulation around the reference.
  - b. Self-directed attention engages the comparator.
  - c. Depending on the circumstances, self-directed attention can either promote regulation or disregulation.
  - d. Self-directed attention promotes disregulation.
- (d/323) 13. Self-directed attention is thought to engage:
- a. the negative feedback loop.
  - b. the reference value.
  - c. social comparison.
  - d. the comparator.
- (a/323) 14. The idea that people have both high and low level goals is captured by the:
- a. feedback hierarchy.
  - b. feedback loop.
  - c. cascading loop.
  - d. none of the above
- (a/323) 15. Powers suggests that higher-order or superordinate systems:
- a. provide reference values to feedback systems immediately below them on the hierarchy.
  - b. physically act as behavioral output.
  - c. control the movement of muscle groups.
  - d. regulate input of perceptual information.
- (c/324) 16. In Powers' system, principles tend to correspond to:
- a. genes.
  - b. neurons.
  - c. traits.
  - d. personality types.
- (c/324-325) 17. Powers proposed that \_\_\_\_\_ resemble scripts, whereas \_\_\_\_\_ concepts are broad guidelines for behavior.
- a. principles, program
  - b. programs, system
  - c. programs, principle
  - d. principles, system

- (d/326) 18. When people perform everyday activities such as doing laundry or going to the store, they are operating at the level of:
- overall sense of self.
  - principles.
  - system concept.
  - programs.
- (a/326) 19. When people are asked to describe themselves, they tend to describe:
- the things they do.
  - the roles they occupy.
  - what they are.
  - what they would like to be.
- (d/327) 20. Which of the following statements is NOT consistent with Vallacher and Wegner's work on action-identification?
- People are more likely to say they are "eating dinner" than "putting food in their mouths and chewing."
  - People regulate their activities in as high-level a way as they can.
  - When people encounter difficulties they tend to retreat to a lower-level identity to act.
  - none of the above
- (a/328) 21. Simon has suggested that \_\_\_\_\_ constitute a call for possible goal reprioritization.
- emotions
  - automatic thoughts
  - assessment processes
  - reference values
- (c/328) 22. Interruptions in the self-regulation of behavior:
- are always brief.
  - are an indication of psychological disorder.
  - lead people to assess how likely they are to reach their goals.
  - are the result of negative emotions.
- (b/329  
Box13.2) 23. After major heart surgery:
- optimists were more likely than pessimists to require hospitalization.
  - pessimists were more likely than optimists to require hospitalization.
  - optimists and pessimists were equally likely to require hospitalization.
  - pessimists were more likely to require hospitalization if the procedure was mild; optimists were more likely to require hospitalization if the procedure was severe.

- (d/329) 24. The expectancy concept represents a link between the:
- psychodynamic and cognitive perspectives.
  - personal construct and cognitive perspectives.
  - biological and cognitive perspectives.
  - social learning and cognitive perspectives.
- (b/329) 25. When expectancies are \_\_\_\_\_ individuals tend to disengage from further efforts.
- uncertain
  - unfavorable
  - discrepant
  - conflicted
- (a/329) 26. After experiencing an interruption of action, Frank begins to consider how likely he is to reach his goal of finishing his term paper. If Frank has a positive expectancy, then we can expect him to:
- work on the paper with renewed effort.
  - temporarily reduce his efforts towards the paper.
  - temporarily stop working on the paper.
  - permanently stop working on the paper.
- (a/330) 27. The belief that one has the personal capability to do the required action is:
- self-efficacy.
  - self-assurance.
  - potency.
  - personal control.
- (c/331) 28. Feedback loops play a role in \_\_\_\_\_ motivations.
- approach but not avoidance
  - avoidance but not approach
  - approach and avoidance
  - neither approach nor avoidance
- (c/331) 29. Priming studies have shown that activating stereotypes of the elderly made it:
- more likely that people would say negative things about the elderly in a subsequent interview.
  - less likely that people would report strong fondness for their own grandparents.
  - more likely that people would walk more slowly upon leaving the experiment.
  - all of the above

- (d/332) 30. Research on automaticity has revealed that:
- activation can spread from memory to goals and behavior.
  - goals can be activated without conscious awareness.
  - people unintentionally mimic the postures and gestures of interaction partners.
  - all of the above
- (b/333) 31. Identifying an action in \_\_\_\_\_ terms makes it easier to disregard immediate outcomes.
- low-level
  - high-level
  - impulsive
  - restrained
- (a/334  
Box13.3) 32. Deindividuation makes people more likely to:
- be aggressive.
  - respond to dispositional cues rather than immediate cues.
  - engage in responsible acts.
  - all of the above
- (d/334) 33. The self-regulation view on personality is:
- one of the oldest perspectives in psychology.
  - more applied than theoretical.
  - offers no suggestions on personality assessment.
  - none of the above
- (c/334) 34. From the cognitive self-regulation perspective, assessment should emphasize:
- the use of a "first to mind" instructional set.
  - measuring the content of personality via traits.
  - measuring individual differences in self-regulatory functions.
  - none of the above
- (d/334) 35. Private self-consciousness refers to:
- the tendency to become embarrassed in social situations.
  - the tendency to keep to oneself.
  - one's "possible selves."
  - the tendency to be self-reflective.

- (b/335) 36. Trapnell and Campbell distinguished which two motives underlying self-consciousness?
- a. curiosity and desire to probe positive feeling states
  - b. curiosity and desire to probe negative feeling states
  - c. curiosity and competence
  - d. competence and knowledge
- (d/336) 37. Problems in self-management often arise because:
- a. there is conflict between goals.
  - b. there are some goals from which complete disengagement is not feasible.
  - c. people sometimes lack the concrete knowledge needed to attain more abstract goals.
  - d. all of the above
- (a/336) 38. Depressed people are more likely to:
- a. self-focus after a failure.
  - b. self-focus after a success.
  - c. realign their hierarchical goal structures after failure.
  - d. realign their hierarchical goal structures after success.
- (d/337) 39. According to Kanfer and colleagues, therapy is:
- a. partly an effort to break down "automatic" human behavior.
  - b. a dynamic feedback system.
  - c. a series of stages.
  - d. all of the above
- (a/337) 40. Which of the following statements regarding Kanfer's view of therapy is true?
- a. Therapy should aim to replace dysfunctional automatic responses with desired ones.
  - b. Therapy should involve free-association.
  - c. Therapy is not a stage-like process like psychoanalysis.
  - d. none of the above
- (b/337) 41. In a means-end analysis, one:
- a. tries to focus on the different outcomes that could occur.
  - b. tries to think of actions that will reduce the difference between one's present state and one's desired state.
  - c. attempts to combine more restricted subgoals into large-scale goals.
  - d. decides whether the end justifies the means.

- (a/338) 42. The cognitive self-regulation perspective has been criticized because:
- robots have limitations people do not have.
  - it fails to account for homeostasis.
  - it only solves the homunculus problem.
  - all of the above
- (d/338-339) 43. The self-regulation perspective has been criticized for:
- failing to solve the homunculus problem.
  - its reliance on homeostatic mechanisms.
  - not saying much about personality.
  - all of the above

### True and False

- (T/316) 1. According to the self-regulation perspective, understanding how artificially intelligent agents accomplish tasks can teach us about how people do things.
- (F/316) 2. Studies indicate that people's schemas for understanding are independent of their schemas for behavior (i.e., the two types of schemas are not linked).
- (T/316) 3. Mirror neurons are active both when performing and observing an action.
- (T/317) 4. Subjective norms arise from what others want you to do and how much that matters to you.
- (F/317) 5. Intentions to act are based on personal attitudes and NOT subjective norms.
- (T/317) 6. The terms personal projects, personal strivings, and current concerns all refer to goals of one type or another.
- (F/318) 7. Setting high goals does not appear to influence performance.
- (F/319) 8. A goal intention concerns how, when, and where to accomplish a goal.
- (T/319) 9. The implementation intention is the intention to take specific actions when encountering specific circumstances.
- (T/319) 10. The intention to reach a particular outcome is called a goal intention.
- (F/320) 11. The deliberative mindset is often overly optimistic in the service of making the best choice.
- (F/320) 12. Although they accomplish different goals, it is clear that the deliberative and implemental mindsets use the same regions of the brain to accomplish their functions.
- (F/320) 13. A feedback loop has three parts.

- (F/321 14. Tolman believed that, in addition to providing an organism with information, reward “stamps” learning in.  
Box13.1)
- (T/322) 15. The idea of feedback control implies that self-regulation is never ending.
- (T/323) 16. Self-directed attention is thought to engage the comparator of the feedback loop that is managing a person’s behavior.
- (F/323) 17. During conditions of heightened self-attention behavior ought to become less closely regulated to the goal that is managing a person’s behavior.
- (F/323) 18. Powers proposed that the behavioral output for a low-level loop consists of setting a goal for a higher-level loop.
- (T/324) 19. Within a hierarchy of feedback loops, reference values become more abstract as one moves from lower to higher levels
- (T/324) 20. Powers proposed that principles specify overriding qualities of behavior that can be displayed in a number of different ways.
- (T/325) 21. Programs, proposed by Powers, operate similarly to scripts.
- (F/325) 22. Enacting a program frees a person from making choices within a larger set of possibilities.
- (T/326) 23. Lower levels in Powers’ hierarchy system may sometimes be functionally superordinate over higher levels.
- (T/326) 24. When people spontaneously describe themselves, they tend to describe things they do rather than who they are.
- (F/327) 25. When both a low-order action identification and a high-order action identification are available, people tend to adopt the lower (more concrete) one.
- (T/327) 26. When people have trouble performing a specific act, they tend to retreat to a lower-level identity to act.
- (F/327) 27. Vallacher and Wegner suggest that when a person fixes a problem at a higher level, they begin to deal with issues at lower levels.
- (F/328) 28. Simon argued that emotions play a relatively meaningless role in information processing.
- (T/328) 29. In Simon’s view emotions are an internal call to change priorities.
- (T/328) 30. Serious obstacles to goal-attainment cause people to interrupt their behavior and engage in an outcome assessment process.

- (T/329) 31. When expectancies for outcomes are favorable, the result is a tendency to reassert effort to attain the original goal.
- (T/329 32. Optimists deal better with stress than pessimists, even for events as severe as Box13.2) experiencing missile attacks.
- (F/329 33. After major heart surgery, pessimists are more depressed than optimists but are Box13.2) similar in terms of the likelihood that they will require rehospitalization.
- (T/330) 34. Disengagement from a goal may be full or partial.
- (F/330) 35. Disengagement from the effort to reach a personal goal is always maladaptive.
- (T/330) 36. Failure to disengage from goals can lead to continuing distress.
- (T/331) 37. People who read words pertaining to stereotypes of the elderly walk away more slowly from the experimental context.
- (F/332) 38. People nonconsciously mimic the gestures but not the posture of interaction partners.
- (T/334 39. Both alcohol intoxication and deindividuation can be interpreted as Box13.3) interferences with normal self-regulatory behavior.
- (T/334) 40. Given their characteristics, people who are high in self-consciousness should be more thorough self-regulators.
- (F/334) 41. People who are high in self-consciousness appear more random in their behavior than people low in self-consciousness.
- (T/335) 42. Identifying an action in high-level terms makes it easier to disregard immediate outcomes.
- (F/335) 43. Trapnell and Campbell distinguished three aspects of self-consciousness: reflection, rumination, and remembrance.
- (T/336) 44. Problems in behavioral regulation often arise when an individual lacks the programs to achieve abstract goals like "being liked."
- (T/336) 45. Problems in behavior sometimes arise because of the inability to disengage from goals.
- (F/337) 46. Depressed people tend to decrease self-focus following failure.
- (T/337) 47. According to Kanfer and his colleagues, therapy is partly an effort to break down controlled processing and replace it with automatic responses,.
- (F/337) 48. When people conduct means-end analysis, they tend to start with small goals and build up to larger ones.

(T/337) 49. The cognitive self-regulation perspective argues that therapy should be directed toward making the individual a better problem solver.

(F/338) 50. A major criticism of the self-regulation approach to personality is that it fails to provide a model of homeostasis.

(T/339) 51. The self-regulation perspective has been criticized for failing to solve the homunculus problem.

### Short Essay

(319) 1. Identify and briefly describe three reasons why higher goals lead to higher performance.

(1) People exert stronger effort toward higher goals; (2) People are more persistent in their efforts; (3) People concentrate more on higher goals and are, therefore, less susceptible to distractions.

(320-321) 2. Describe the major elements of the feedback loop and how they operate to control behavior.

The feedback loop's input function is its perception of the way things are. The comparator checks this perception against a reference value, assessing whether the perception and reference value are the same or not. If they are NOT the same, the result is an output (or a change in output). The output is aimed at reducing the discrepancy between perception and reference value.

(322) 3. Self-regulation is described as continuous and never-ending. Briefly explain why this is so.

Every change in output function creates a change in perceived present conditions, resulting in new input, which must then be checked against the reference value. In addition, most behavioral reference values are dynamic and change over time. Thus, there is a continuous interplay between adjusting one's action and moving forward to the next phase of a continually evolving goal.

(323-325) 4. Identify and define the three levels of Powers' hierarchy that are most relevant to personality.

(1) SYSTEM CONCEPTS: System concepts are abstract qualities. An example of a system concept with respect to self-regulation would be an individual's ideal self. (2) PRINCIPLES: Principles are broad guidelines that specify overriding qualities of behavior. Principles seem to be qualities that are describable by trait labels. (3) PROGRAMS: A program is similar to a script. Programs specify a general course of action.

- (327-328) 5. Give an example of a situation in which an emotion signals a reprioritization of one's goals.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Intense anxiety may be a signal you are not attending to personal well-being and ought to do so quickly;

ALTERNATIVE 2: Anger may be a signal that personal autonomy is threatened and needs higher priority.

- (336) 6. The hierarchical model suggests at least three ways for problems in self-regulation to arise. Identify these three ways.

(1) Conflict between goals;

(2) Lacking knowledge about the actions that should be taken to achieve abstract goals;

(3) Being unable to disengage.

- (337) 7. Briefly describe the steps involved in means-end analysis.

(1) END: Determine difference between present state and desired state; (2) MEANS: Devise an action to reduce the difference; (3) Break large, abstract actions down into more restricted goals and concrete acts and continue doing so until it is relatively easy to get from here to there.

- (338-339) 8. Briefly discuss two criticisms of the cognitive-self-regulation perspective.

Among the possibilities, (1) Some of those who speak from the cognitive self-regulation perspective take the computer metaphor very literally; but, knowing how a computer accomplishes something does not necessarily tell us anything about how people do the same thing; (2) Computers or robots cannot possibly serve as adequate models for human behavior, since both have limitations humans do not. For example, humans have free will and make their own decisions, while computers and robots rely on programs they have been given; (3) The cognitive approach, in particular, is little more than a transplanting of cognitive psychology into the subject matter of personality; (4) A model of human behavior based on feedback principles is merely a model of homeostasis ("steady state"). Such mechanisms make sense when talking about control over body temperature, etc.; but people rarely have behavioral goals that involve steady states; (5) The feedback approach fails to deal effectively with the homunculus problem (refers to a hypothetical tiny man who sits inside your head and tells you what to do). The question is, where do the highest-order goals come from; what tells the "little man" what to do? (6) The cognitive self-regulation perspective seems too mechanistic; too much a description from the outside looking in, with too little of the feel of what it means to be a person who has a personality.

## TEST YOURSELF 13-1

Source: Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1985). The Self-Consciousness Scale: A revised version for use with general populations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 15, 687-699.

Description of Scale: This article presents items from a scale designed to measure private self-consciousness--the tendency to attend to and be aware of one's inner feelings, attitudes, and motives. Persons high on this dimension tend to engage in more effective self-regulation. Sample items include "I'm always trying to figure myself out," or "I'm quick to notice changes in my mood." Students respond to each of the items on a 4-point response scale (ranging from 1 = "Not at all like me" to 4 = "A lot like me"). Responses are summed so that higher scores indicate higher levels of private self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness represents a tendency to monitor what's going on inside oneself. It isn't a matter of constantly thinking about oneself but rather a tendency to slip easily, and perhaps repeatedly over time, into the state of being self-aware. Some of the items of the scale refer to feelings and moods, whereas other items reflect a sense of knowing about your personal preferences and motives. Yet other items reflect a more general tendency to be aware of yourself in a variety of circumstances. Consistent with this diversity of item content, the dimension of private self-consciousness has been associated with diverse effects in research.

For example, people who have high levels of private self-consciousness are more aware of feelings they are experiencing than are people who have low levels of this disposition. They also seem to actually know their behavioral tendencies better and are therefore better able to predict how they'll act in many kinds of circumstances. People in whom this disposition is strong are also more likely to display the characteristics of careful self-regulation than are people in whom this disposition is weaker. In view of this self-regulatory difference, dispositional private self-consciousness might be viewed as a dimension that provides insight into personality from an information processing perspective. (Note: This article also presents items designed to measure public self-consciousness, the tendency to be aware of oneself as a social object, which is relevant for Box 13-3 on page 334.)

## PRIMARY SOURCES

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