

Elliot Aronson, *University of California, Santa Cruz*

Dr. Aronson's primary research interests are in the general area of social influence. His experiments have been aimed both at testing theory and at improving the human condition by influencing people to change their dysfunctional attitudes and behavior (e.g., prejudice, bullying, wasting of water, energy and other environmental resources). One of Dr. Aronson's key areas of interest and research has been the theory of cognitive dissonance. He is credited with refining the theory, which posits that when attitudes and behaviors are inconsistent with one another that psychological discomfort results. This discomfort motivates the person experiencing it to either change their behavior or attitude so that consonance is restored.

Roy Baumeister, *Florida State University*

Dr. Baumeister is interested in five areas of research: (1) Self-control, choice, decision making. He has investigated how people regulate their emotions, resist temptation, break bad habits, and perform up to their potential -- and why they often fail to do so. Related work shows how stressful and draining it can be to make choices. (2) The need to belong. He has worked on how people respond to being rejected or excluded from social groups, as well as romantic heartbreak. Also, many psychological processes are based on the desire to connect with other people. (3) A series of studies of human sexuality has addressed questions such as how nature and culture influence people's sex drive, rape and sexual coercion, the cultural suppression of female sexuality, and how couples negotiate their sexual patterns. (4) Consciousness, volition, emotion, and "free will." He is beginning to do studies on the role of conscious processes in how people decide their actions. Does emotion cause behavior? Is the conscious experience of free choice an illusion? (5) Irrationality and self-destructive behavior. An enduring theme of his work is why people do stupid things. Self-defeating behavior is the essence of irrationality and thus shows the limits of human rationality.

Carol Dweck, *Stanford University*

Dr. Dweck's work spans social and developmental psychology and examines the self-conceptions people use to structure the self and guide their behavior. Her research looks at the origins of these self-conceptions, their role in motivation and self-regulation, and their impact on achievement and interpersonal processes. She identified two implicit theories of intelligence: 1) Students who have an "entity" theory view their intelligence as an unchangeable internal characteristic, and 2) students with an "incremental" theory believe that their intelligence is malleable and can be increased through effort. She demonstrated empirically that students who hold an entity theory of intelligence are less likely to attempt challenging tasks and are at risk for academic underachievement. Further, she has provided evidence that praising students for their intelligence has the potential to limit their intellectual growth.

Jacquelynne Eccles, *University of Michigan*

Dr. Eccles' research has demonstrated the central role of social context in children's and adolescents' development. Her work has built the case that some systematic individual-level, age-related changes are a consequence of systematic changes in the contexts, especially the family and the school, that individuals move through as they age. In explicating the way in which context operates in developmental trajectories, Dr. Eccles has also amplified the expectancy-value model of motivation and choice by showing how context shapes both expectancies and values. Her work especially highlights the centrality of values as key to understanding individual differences in such gender-related choices as taking advanced math and aspiring to jobs in fields linked to physical science, technology, and engineering. Dr. Eccles continually relates her work to school policy and educational curricula.

Dan Gilbert, *Harvard University*

Dr. Gilbert's research with Tim Wilson on "affective forecasting" investigates how and how well people can make predictions about the emotional impact of future events. His groundbreaking research on how people make judgments, choices and decisions lies at the intersection of cognitive psychology and behavioral economics. His work on how people try—and fail—to predict their own satisfactions has had dramatic implications for strategy, sales and marketing, and for understanding customers. His recent book, *Stumbling on Happiness*, has addressed these issues and proposes a counterintuitive way by which people can come to have better predictive power when thinking about their future selves.

James Jackson, *University of Michigan*

Dr. Jackson's research focuses on issues of racial and ethnic influences on life course development, attitude change, reciprocity, social support, and coping and health among African Americans. Dr. Jackson's research includes studies of race relations and racism in an international, comparative perspective; studies of the influences of race and ethnicity on the mental health of black Americans; and studies of health and aging among African Americans. Dr. Jackson has served as the principal investigator of several national surveys that constitute a treasure trove of information on the black American population in the United States. These surveys, which cover political attitudes and behaviors, physical and mental health, family dynamics, housing and residential mobility, and employment/unemployment and other relationships to the labor market, are used by social scientists throughout the nation.

Elizabeth Loftus, *University of California, Irvine*

Dr. Loftus investigates the circumstances under which information received subsequent to an accident or crime may cause predictable changes in witness' recollections of the event. Dr. Loftus' criticism of repression has altered the cornerstones of psychoanalysis and gives new rise to a number of questions: (1) How common is it for memories of child abuse to be repressed? (2) How are jurors and judges likely reacting to these repressed memory claims? (3) When the memories surface, what are they like? (4) How authentic are the memories? Her experiments reveal how memories can be changed by things that we are told. Facts, ideas, suggestions and other forms of post-event information can modify our memories. The legal field, so reliant on memories, has been a significant application of the memory research.

Sandra Scarr, *Professor Emerita, University of Virginia*

Dr. Scarr studied identical and fraternal twins' aptitude and school achievement scores. The study revealed that intellectual development was heavily influenced by genetic ability, especially among disadvantaged children. It also showed that on average, black children demonstrated less genetic and more environmental influence on their intelligence than white children. Dr. Scarr also collaborated with Margaret Williams on a clinical study which demonstrated that premature birth infants who receive stimulation gain weight faster and recover faster than babies left in isolation (the practice at that time). Through Dr. Scarr's research efforts and public policy initiatives, she has worked tirelessly to improve conditions for children and families in this nation. During her distinguished career, she has directed several major research projects that have addressed fundamental problems in relation to child development and family life.

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