

## **Advance Course in Social Psychology**

### **Lecture 21: Social Influence- Part III**

Hello friends, welcome back. Today, I will continue my discussion related to social influence, and I am going to discuss about another aspect of social influence, that is self-presentation. We all understand the literal meaning of self-presentation very well, no doubt. But what are the psychological factors or psychological basis of understanding human behavior or social behavior of an individual based on the criteria that how an individual present himself before the social world. Now this concept of self-presentation pertains to the process of self-disclosure to the extent that how a person discloses certain information about himself to the other person in order to gain some approval or enhance his or her self-esteem. The way we present ourselves definitely will have a very deep impact on the other person to understand ones.

Now this process of self-presentation also constitutes some verbal and nonverbal behavior. But definitely social psychologists have preferred to concentrate on verbal forms of behavior and information which is easy to understand and easy to measure. So, we can say that self-presentation refers to the content of self-disclosure to other people although both verbal and nonverbal behavior communicate information about ourselves. But the more we are vocal about our own nice dislikes and information we have and sharing with the other person or disclosing with the other person it is more easy for the other person to have an impression about us.

Erwin Goffman in the year 1959 contributed to the sociological research proposed based on the social theory of self-presentation and focused on the context of human behavior based on viewers impression of the action or behavior. It is simple connotation that what we are presenting to the other person in form of self-disclosure or information we are sharing there is some kind of impression that is being formed on the other person based on ones own action or behavior. What we do? What we say? Definitely has an impact on the other person pertaining to a particular social situation and how people will interpret that action or behavior that is self-presentation. So, any behavior intended to convey a particular image of a particular information about the self to other people is termed as self-presentation. As we are discussing about this concept pertaining to social influence it is very easy to understand, but what is the psychological message that lies behind the process of social influence that we try to change or alter or modify the behavior of the other person for ourselves that is the most important thing that we focus in this discussion.

So, there are two dimensions of self-presentation the positiveness or negativeness of a person's self-disclosure and the intimacy level of that information. To what extent we are self-disclosing a certain information which is positive or negative based on our relation with the other person that will define or complete the process of self-presentation which will which possesses the

significance of the information that has been disclosed to the other person whether the relationship is formal, informal, deep or superficial or simply acquaintance and what kind of information we are sharing will have what kind of impact on the other person. This involves the quality and the quantity of information based on the quality of relationship with the other person. So, when we are talking about self-presentation it contains two aspects positive or negativeness of a person's self-disclosure and the intimacy level of that information. The more the information is very crucial and the way we are expressing or sharing with the other person based on a relationship with that person that will create a different impression on that person.

The positiveness of self-presentation is useful primarily for gaining approval and other types of rewards from other people. For instance if I am sharing a very positive news about myself with the other person then definitely the impact or the impression on that person is going to be very much positive because the news or information is rewarding and it is enhancing one's own self-esteem. So, some common strategies of self-presentation include exemplification, self-promotion and supplication. The idea is that what kind of information we are sharing with the person will actually define the type of impression that the other person will form about us. So, it is basically an intended behavior to create an impression on the other person.

Now this process of self-presentation includes different kind of social process for example, exemplification. A person can accomplish exemplification by presenting himself or herself to be honest, trustworthy, disciplined, self-sacrificing, generous or principled. The more you are proposing yourself to be a virtuous person then our behavior and action will also be accordingly and the impression that will create will have a very different kind of connotation for the other person and that is a process of social influence which is termed as exemplification under one term that is self-presentation. So, this involves inducing other person that the other person should regard me as an honest, as a trustworthy, self-sacrificing, generous, kind and a disciplined or principled person. So, the information of most of the time we will try to disclose with the other person while compelling or creating an impression on the other person that I should be regarded in those aspects only that is I am honest, I am trustworthy, I am faithful, I am disciplined, I am principled, I am self-sacrificing and I am very much honest.

So, when we are sharing disclosing any information based on these virtues the impression will also be formed in the similar way and that is a process of social influence based on exemplification. The other type of process of self-presentation is self-promotion. The way we exaggerate our own virtues or own competency exaggerate about our own competencies and skills will create a different impression on the other person. For instance getting any big financial grant for research project or it can be a press coverage you have performed well and it has been highlighted in the newspaper or a person has got a very good job with high kin salary or promotion or there can be a new certification based on high profile training. When this kind of information

is being shared with the other person or disclosed with the other person then the person is actually trying to boast about his own competencies and skills.

When this kind of boasting process is being in the process of social interaction then definitely the other person will have only these kind of impression onto that person. But the idea is that how the person is presenting himself before the other person. So, this is another way of social influence or self-presentation in terms of self-promotion. So, it is a basically a strategic behavior of making oneself look good to others by highlighting, or exaggerating one's competence and abilities that this is what I am capable of and based on my capabilities I have achieved so many things. When you are sharing or disclosing these kind of achievements with the other person you are presenting yourself before other group members or in any social situation that people will perceive you on those terms itself.

And the other is supplication posing yourself to be weak in order to gain some kind of support or approval from the other person that is supplication that you are supplementing or supplicating yourself in a very weak situation in terms of presentation and how the other person will try to or will have an impression that you are a weak person and you will gain some favor or approval from the other person that is supplication. It is again a strategy of self-presentation that involves depicting oneself as weak or needy and how others are motivated based on your self-presentation that they are ready to provide assistance for in terms of care or monetary help. For instance any student who is crying before professor for increment in the grade. Now this crying is actually a strategy of supplication that the professor can have sympathy with you and he or she may assist you or help you by increasing your grade from B to A. This is supplication or any driver who is crying to the police officer over a ticket may be supplicating that is trying to get help or mercy via pity.

May be that the driver has breached any traffic rule and how based on gaining sympathy the traffic police also tries to assist him for not leaving any fine on him and setting him free based on his presentation that he was weak or unable to drive properly. So this is another strategy of self-presentation that the way we are sharing information to the other person and what kind of information is having an impact on the other person will create a similar impression on to the other person. This is self-presentation that means it is a strategic behavior to create an impression or create a message or image of a particular person content or information to the other person in order to gain any social approval or reward for set or for achieving a goal that is self-presentation which actually involves certain strategies such as exemplification, self-promotion and supplication. So this is how this process of self-presentation entails social influence where we are trying to modify or alter the behavior of the other person for one's own profit or target approval. Initially what we discussed about are different kind of influences we have talked about but this is something where an individual at individual a person at an individual or personal level is trying

is making efforts to influence the behavior of the person for their own approval or for own benefits or profit.

Next comes impression management. Impression management is very much similar to self-presentation but here the connotation is very much deviating from what we have discussed till now in terms of self-presentation. When we are talking about impression management then we are talking about the conscious patterns of behavior that a person engages in to create a specific impression onto the other person for gaining approval or any social reward based on the acceptance of their behavior or as a person in a particular situation. So when we are talking about self-impression management it refers to behaviors intended to control how others perceive themselves. So we are creating an impression in a very conscious manner so that we are able to control the behavior of the others based on the impression they form about us.

So our intention is consciously behave in a way or disclose any information in a way that the other person is being controlled in a manner that he or she will formulate similar kind of information for yourself. So impression management refers to some strategic behaviors intended to control how others will perceive themselves especially while guiding them to attribute desirable traits to themselves. For instance if I say a very simple example that when I want to seek approval at workplaces for some policy or for some approval for some leave or any kind of project then we will try to impress the higher authority by praising them. Now praising them is okay but at the same time what is the psychological message behind this praising the higher authority is that we are controlling the higher authority in a very strategic manner that they also get impressed with us and we seek approval. This is impression management where the behavior is conscious of the person who is trying to create impression on the other person and at the same time the person is also controlling the behavior of the other person to form a particular impression.

This is impression management. It is assumed that people attempt to present favorable images of themselves as a means of obtaining social rewards and approval and enhancing self-esteem. If we talk about self-presentation it is an intended behavior that people should perceive you in a specific form but in impression management it is a conscious behavior where you are controlling the behavior of the other person at the same time when you are talking about self-presentation we do not have any control on the other person. But when we are engaging in the process of impression management the behavior of an individual is also conscious and at the same time the person is also controlling the behavior of the other person to form a particular impression on themselves. So, impression management has been offered as an alternative explanation of some phenomena that traditionally have been interpreted in terms of cognitive dissonance theory.

Now why it is being considered along with cognitive dissonance theory is which we have already discussed that when things or any decision that does not go in the favor of the particular person

then the person tries to persuade or control the factors accordingly so that the things should turn out to be favorable to him. So, whenever the person experience some dissonance in the environment the person engages in some kind of strategic behavior to create a favorable impression on the other person and the person can win approval and enhance self-esteem. So, the process of impression management is actually based in terms of cognitive dissonance theory that means to maintain or resume the balance. Now when we are talking about impression management then we also have to accept the fact that presenting or forming some image of ourselves to others is also an inescapable aspect of all our attempts at social interaction. Whenever we are attending any meeting we are attending any social event or function we are having.

So, ultimately everybody has this idea in his or her mind that I should be the highlight I should be getting some importance in any event or in any social event while dressing yourself to up to mark so that you get the attention of the other members of the group or your performance should be so fine that the members of the board also highlight you based on your performance. But ultimately this becomes an ulterior motive of every person that they want to form a positive impression on the other person. So, we can say that self-presentation involves impression management when we care about the impressions other have of us. Why we are caring that what impressions other should have of us is because whenever a person is experience some dissonance in any social situation then automatically the person engages in the process of impression management by adopting certain strategic behaviors to control the behavior of the other person and form a very different impression about oneself. Some psychologists have also distinguished impression management from self-presentation by proposing that impression management involves deliberate conscious strategies.

As I mentioned that since it is an ulterior motive of an individual it involves conscious strategies and strategies while focusing on creating an impression and at the same time controlling the behavior of the target person. We can say that impression management is defined as a conscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of other people about a person object or event by regulating and controlling information in social interaction. This concept of impression management was first conceptualized by Erwin Goffman and was later expanded in the year 1967. So, this is how this process of conscious and strategic behaviors have a target to focus on people to seek approval in a very strategic manner. These two forms of behaviors based on self-presentation and impression management will talk about social influence and changing or modifying the behavior of a person in any social situation.

Rest I will continue in the next class. Thank you so much.