

Advance Course in Social Psychology

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Lecture 22 : Social Influence- Part IV

Hello friends, welcome back. Let us continue with our discussion related to social influence. In the previous discussion, I started talking about impression management. Before that it was self-presentation. Today also I will continue to discuss about impression management. In the previous class, I just gave a very brief idea about the meaning and definition of impression management.

Let us continue more in detail about this process of social influence in terms of impression management. As I discussed earlier that impression management is a goal directed, strategic and a conscious process and involves the intentional use of tactics to manipulate the impressions that others form about us. So, it is a way to control the other person's impression and compelling in a very certain manner that what impression the other person should have for us and gain some social approval or achieve the target. So, the idea about impression management is that involves efforts to produce first impressions on others.

As generally we say that first impression is the last impression. The more the person is able to control the behavior of the other person in a very strategic or tactful manner, the more the person is successful in creating an impression onto the other person. This is a strong influence on the other person. It is a most ulterior motive that goes beyond the maintenance of smooth social relations. Maybe the person can modify the other person's behavior or his own behavior to maintain any interpersonal relationship.

But when the person has certain motives to achieve, then in what manner the person can control the behavior of the other person that the person has a very positive impression on oneself and at the same time the person is able to achieve the target. So, this is impression management. So, when we are talking about impression management, it includes certain

different kinds of behaviors such as accounts. Accounts here means explanations that a person give for any negative event to escape from disapproval. Posing yourself to a very naive person or to be a very clear hearted person, the person will try to give different kind of explanations in a very strategic form that the other person will have an impression that you are a naive person or you are a simple person.

That is another way. It can be in form of excuses also that giving any information in a way that you cannot contribute much to the target and at the same time you are not taking the responsibility as well for any negative outcome. There can be different ways to explain or give excuses that where you are defying or you are shredding of your responsibility for the consequence that has happened based on any event and you are creating an impression that you are not guilty. Or it can be in form of opinion conformity where the person tries to agree with the other person in a way that the person has an impression that you are agreeing and enhancing his and the other person's self-esteem. So, based on these subtle forms of behaviors like accounts or excuses or conformity, the person can partake in impression management and is able to control others perceptions of themselves or events pertaining to them.

Now giving very solid excuses in a way that the person can believe that you are not responsible for any negative consequences of the event or explaining the other person in a very strategic manner that whatever has happened you were not there in during that event. Now all these strategic behaviors are completely focused on controlling the impression the other person will have on us. This is impression management. So, these kind of subtle behaviors have a very strategic orientation and a strong psychological message that should go to the other person in a very positive manner. So, what are the aims of impression management? The primary aim is to obtain favorable outcomes.

You are praising the higher authority to an extent to seek approval or to seek some favorable outcome from the other person who is authoritative in nature. This is the first aim of impression management. The second is to gain social approval to identify people where to whom when you interact with them you approach them you will definitely seek approval for what you want and the third it requires to identify certain norms which dictate that on what patterns the person will be acceptable any social situation or interaction. The person will try to adapt to those norms in a very widespread and agreeable manner and based on this the person will have positive or negative evaluations and seek approval. So, these are the aims of impression management.

The first is to have favorable outcome, the second is to seek social approval and the third is to identify those norms which help a person to adopt to the norms of the groups in such a manner that you will always have positive evaluation of the other people in the situation. All in all we are basically controlling the behavior of the other person while having a positive evaluation of oneself. At the same time impression management also entails certain phenomena. It is not that we just encountered any person we interact and at the same time we just form an impression of the other person. It is not like that.

It is based on certain information that we already have or we receive from other sources and then we form impression. So, the process of impression management is also a phenomena in its own way where it entails three types of phenomena. The first is primacy effect, the sense effect and the halo effect or the halo error or the additive effect. The first is the primacy effect as it is being said that the first impression is the last impression. So, the first information that we gain for the target person that means for the person we are evaluating the first impression we create based on the first hand information we get and we weigh upon so much heavily on that information that we tend to form a positive impression about that person itself.

That is why we say that first impression is the last impression. So, the primacy effect describes the tendency for information that we learn first to be weighted more heavily than information that we learn later. So, whatever the initial information we have for the other person we try to create impression based on that available information itself. The other is recency effect it is not only that first impression is the last impression, but sometimes the information we receive in the last that also leaves a very strong impression on an individual. So, this is not to say that it is always good to be first in some cases the information that comes later can be most influential may be not the initial information, but may be the later information that we have received for the other person that is more influential and we create impression about the other person accordingly.

So, the recency effect describes the tendency for the information that comes later is given more weightage. We weigh upon heavily on the second on the information that we received later and that creates that helps in creating a different impression about the other person. So, there is a extreme difference between primacy and recency effect as the term implies primacy effect the first information we get in hand and in recency effect the initial the later information in the later stage that we receive will have a very influential impact or

impression on ourselves. The other is halo effect or the additive effect for instance any person that has been evaluated on positive notions and later when we come to know about his some negative aspects of his behavior or his actions or decisions may be the positive evaluation will be weighed upon so heavily that we will try to exclude any negative information about that person and we will again favor more on those positive evaluation itself. So, that is halo effect or halo error or additive effect that the more effect we have the more information we have then what kind of effect we have or about impression we have about the other person.

So, the halo effect sometimes also called the halo error is the tendency for positive impressions of a person in one area to positively or negatively influence one's opinion or feelings in other areas. So, it has a carry over effect if we already have a positive evaluation in one area then may be the other aspect of his behavior will also will have a positive evaluation no matter the person is perceived to be negative, but since we have already evaluated him on positive terms he or she will also be evaluated positively in the other areas as well. So, once we have formed a positive impression the new negative information just does not seem as bad as it might have been had we learned it first had it been we have received a negative information about the same person then it would have a very different influence on us to form a positive evaluation. So, once positive evaluation has been formed it becomes difficult to form a negative impression about that person in some other areas and forms. For example, when a person finds out someone they have formed a positive gestalt here positive gestalt means an overall understanding of the person or the overall impression has cheated on his or her taxes, but because of the positive gestalt the person may dismiss the significance of this behavior.

The person will try to dismiss the negative aspect that he has cheated on the taxes based on previous positive evaluations. This may even think behavior and connected with your positive gestalt and we try to connect it with the positive impressions not with only negative information. So, this is halo effect or halo error which is a tendency to have evaluation in individual high or many traits because of a shared belief shared or a carry forward beliefs. We already we have a positive evaluation for oneself then definitely even negative information is there we will try to dismiss those negative information and try to create more positive evaluations of that person. So, this is how these phenomena's work at parallel when we are creating any impression about the other person it is primacy effect, recency effect and the halo effect or additive effect.

Next comes the most important techniques of impression management. Since we are continuously using one term conscious strategic behaviors to control the behavior of the other person to have a specific impression about oneself then what are those techniques, what are those tasks, what are those strategies where consciously a person is controlling the behavior of the other person. So, person as an individual engages in different type of tasks that engages himself in impression management. The first is ingratiation, intimidation, self handicapping, flattery, slime effect and self enhancements. Ingratiation it is a strategic behavior that requires efforts to win the liking and approval of the other person specially by deliberate impression management.

We are trying to impress the other person in a way that the person who is an authority figure we are trying to praise the other person to such an extent the person is actually being compelled to take any decision in the favor of that person. This is ingratiation where the person is usually regarded as strategic, insincere and manipulative. The person can engage in any kind of illicit behavior as well just to praise the target person or the authoritative person and the person is being in a very subtle manner compelled to take decision in the favor of that person. So, this is how the person is consciously controlling the behavior of the target person to take the decision in his own favor. This is a process of ingratiation as a technique of impression management.

The other is intimidation where there is force, where there is aggression compelling the other person or the target person to take decision in their favor. This involves showing aggression or anger to the target person and again the person is being compelled to comply and refer to the act of making someone feel timid or afraid. When you are threatening the other person based on your anger and aggression and then compelling the person to comply based on favorable decision that is intimidation. For instance, in any board room meeting, any employee can tap hardly on the top of the desk and the other persons or may be the target person is threatened and the person is forced to take decision based on that person itself. So, this is intimidation or when you are not convinced with the decision of the authority figure, we sometimes employee tend to stand up and they will leave the room by slamming the door on the authoritative figures face.

This is intimidation where you are using force, anger or aggression to threat the other person and the decision is being taken in your favor. This is intimidation. The other is self handicapping. It is similar to supplication that we try to pose ourselves to be so weak, but based on a particular situation the person will try to provide information in a very tactful manner that you are being you are presenting yourself to be a weak person or a helpless

person and the person is forced to assist you in that direction. For instance, any person who is undergoing some financial losses in the business and the way he present himself to the other business partner or business associates may be the other business associates will be compelled to help him financially to pick up his business.

Definitely the decision will go in his favor or he will gain some approval or favor from the target person. This is self handicapping. How you pose yourself to be helpless and you are compelling the other person to comply in a very favorable manner. Ultimately you are controlling the behavior of the other person. You are influencing the behavior influencing the other person to take decisions in your favor.

The other is flattery which is the most common form of strategic behavior when we talk about impression management. It is the act of giving excessive compliment or favors to the other person with the purpose of having approval from the target person. We try to favor the other person while doing more to him or give him a excessive compliments to the person in so that the other person feels happy and honored and in return the person will take the decision in your favor. This is flatly the most common form of strategy in impression management.

The other is line effect. It is a behavioral tendency. For example, any employee who is likable to the higher authorities, but at the same time the same person is not likable to these subordinates that is leaking upwards and kicking downwards. The person is trying to impress higher authorities, but the same person is not respecting his or her subordinates. This is line effect. You are creating a very positive impression to the higher authorities so that you may get promotion and at the same time you are also trying to harm your lower level employees or your subordinates.

So in this kind of tactful behavior liking and disliking for the same person is existing, but the person is actually taking all the favors from the higher authority. This is line effect. And the last is self enhancement. This entails certain efforts to increase or enhance one's own appeal to others.

It is not about appearance anxiety. It is about how you look to the other person and how the other person will perceive you in a very refined personality. There has to be some kind

of persona that you carry based on your dressing sense, based on the props you use to create a different kind of impression on the other person or through a style of dress. For instance, a very common impression formation can be based on that you are wearing sunglasses and those glasses are so expensive that when you are wearing them you are giving a very different impression to the others. You are wearing specs which gives you a look that you are an intellectual person or intellectually sound person. So these are the self enhancements which entails certain props we use to create a very specific impression on the other person and the person will also pursue you accordingly.

So these are the impression formation tags which are being followed to impress the other person while controlling the behavior of the other person and you gain approval or some positive favorable outcome from the other person in form of ingratiation which is actually regarded as insincere and manipulative intimidation which entails and which possess lot of anger and aggression to receive or gain any favorable outcome. It can be self handicapping where you are engaging in behavior to prove yourself as helpless. It can be flattery where you are giving excessive compliment to the other person for gaining some favorable outcome. It can be slime effect where you are trying to impress the higher authority but at the same time you are disrespecting the subordinates but ultimately you are gaining favorable outcome. It can be self enhancements where using certain props to create a different impression while enhancing your physical appearances.

So this is how impression management is different from self presentation because in self presentation you are disclosing you are engaging in a process of self disclosure but in process of impression management a person is engaging in certain strategic conscious behaviors to control the behavior of the other person and form a very specific impression about oneself. So this is how the process of social influence can also be analyzed based on self presentation and impression management. So we are through with this module of social influence. I will continue a new module in the next class. Thank you so much. Thank you.