

Week 14

Social Psychology I: Attitudes and Social Cognition

Definition

- Social psychology is “the scientific study of how people think about, influence, and relate to one another.”
- How the individual mind works in the actual presence of others, implied presence of others, and the imagined presence of others.
- Studies attitude formation, self-concept, forming relationships, social influence, social thinking, motivations for helping and harming others.

Stanford Prison Experiment (Zimbardo, 1971) – Video Questions

- What was the situation?
 - What procedures were involved?
- How did the situation influence behaviour for prisoners and guards differently?
- How does this study demonstrate the central tenet of social psychology?
- Do you think you would have behaved very differently in this situation?
- Which one of the subjects eventually became a psychologist?

Attitudes

- Attitude
 - a disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably toward some person, thing, event, place, idea, or situation (often called “attitude object”)

Attitudes

- Three components of attitude
 - cognitive - what we think or believe about something
 - emotional - how we feel about it
 - behavioural - how we act toward it

Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change

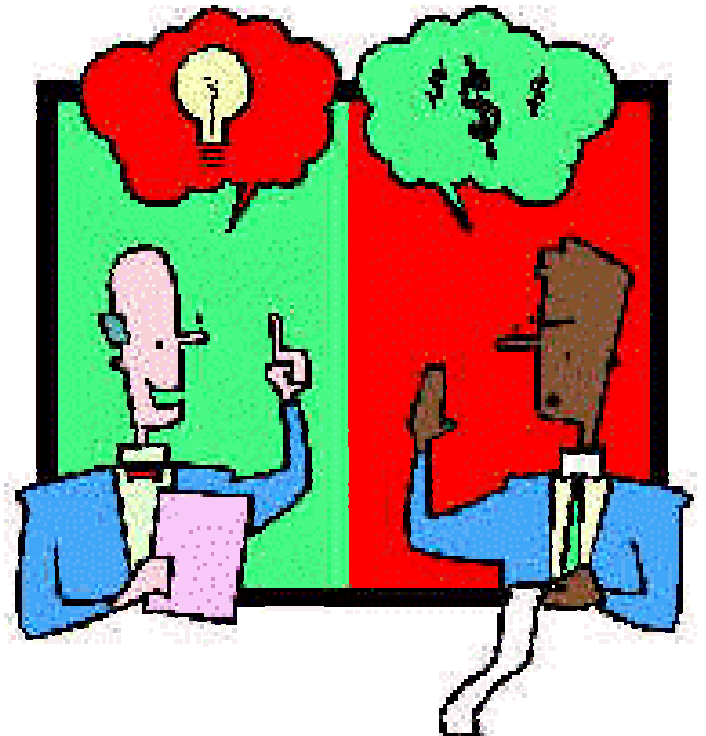
- The source of the message
 - expert source
 - honest source
 - attractive source
 - source's body language - eye contact

Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change

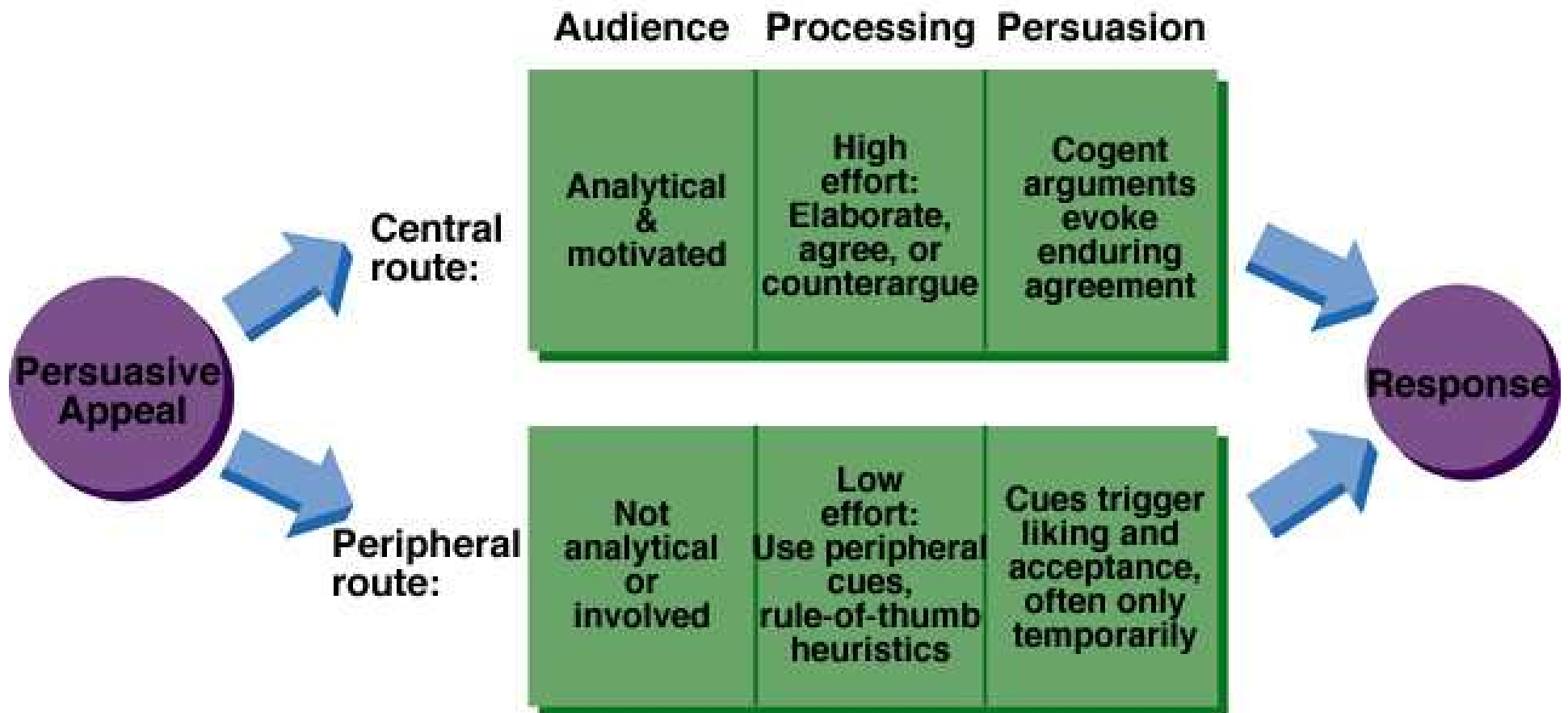
- The content of the message
 - acknowledge and counter opponent's claim
 - high-fear appeals are not as effective as low-fear appeals

Persuasive Communications and Attitude Change

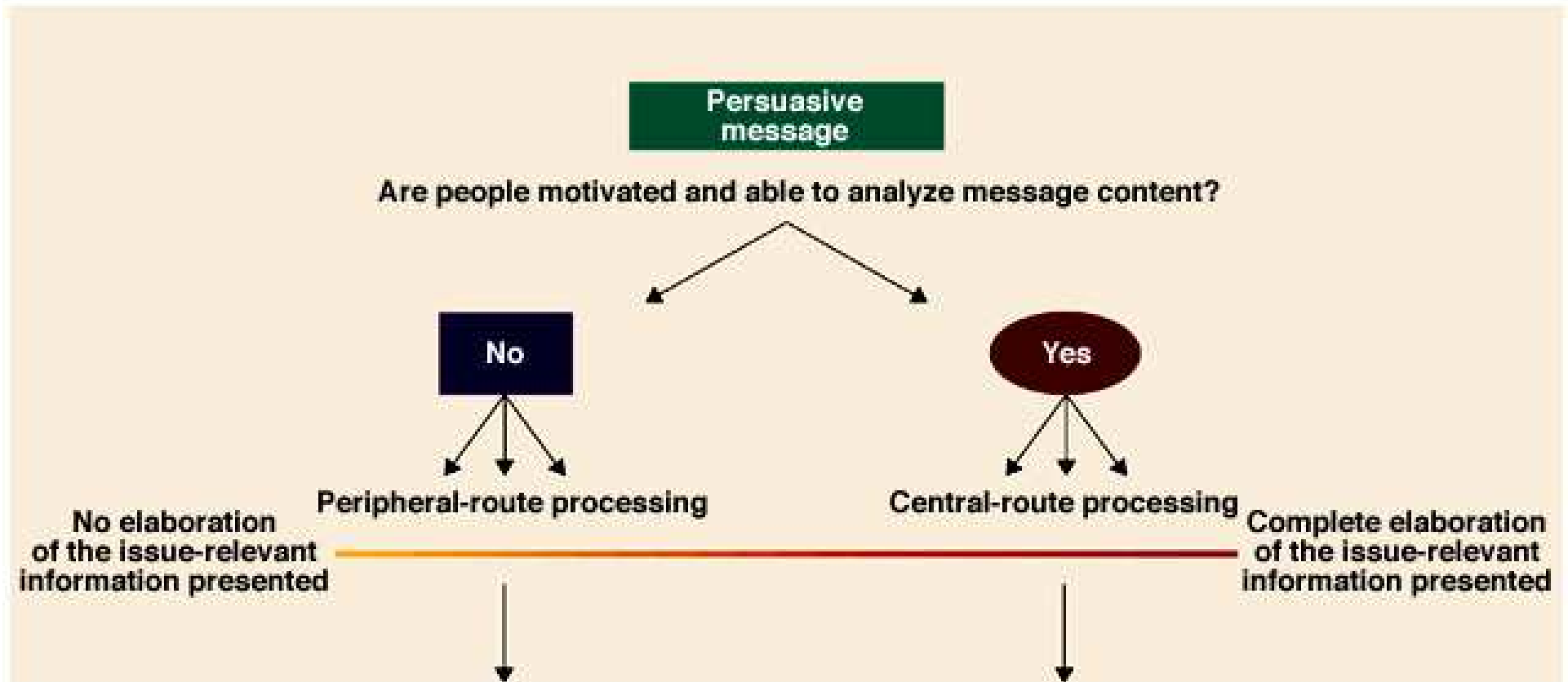
- The audience receiving the message
 - audience's intelligence
 - audience's mood



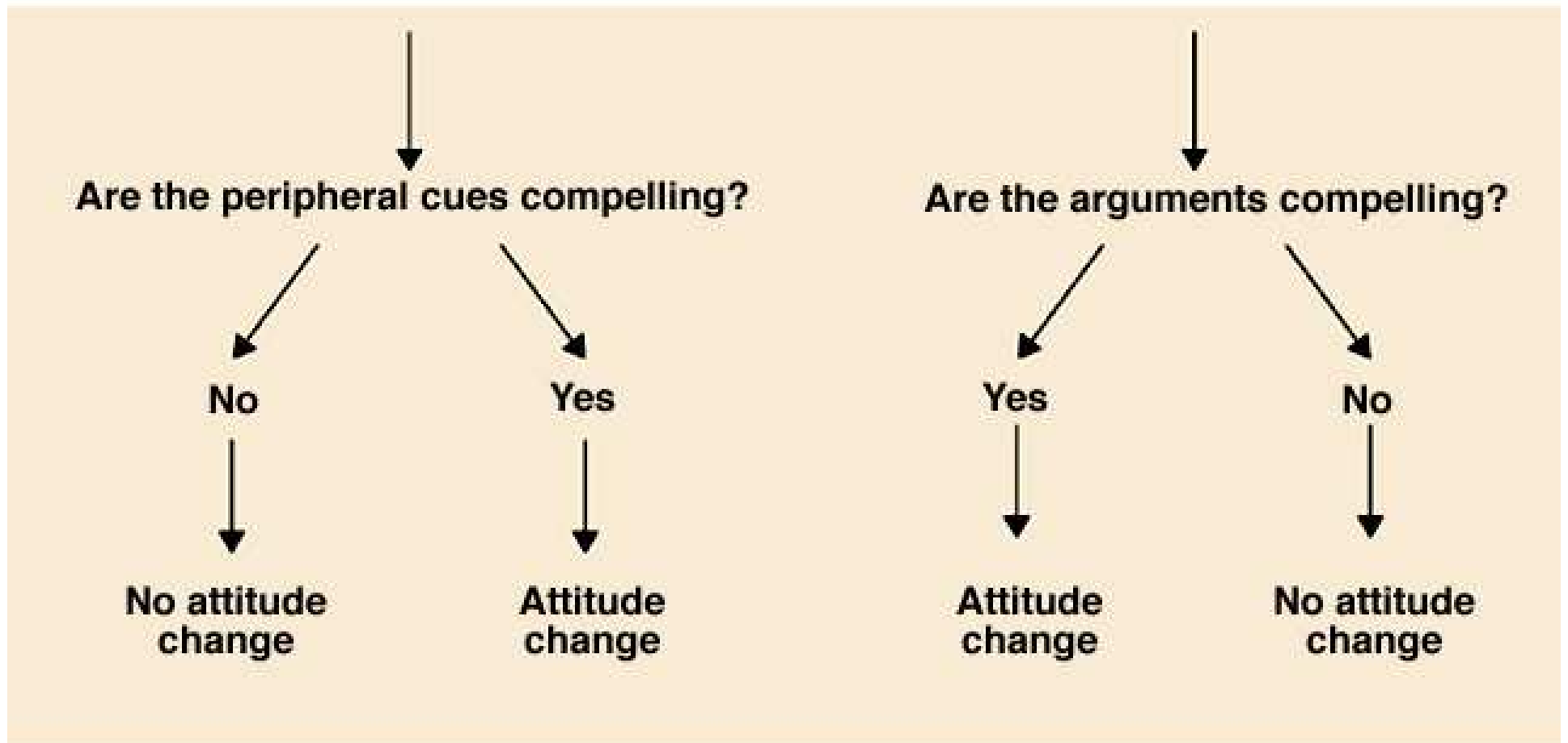
Central & Peripheral Routes to Persuasion



Two Routes to Persuasion



Two Routes to Persuasion



Cognitive Consistency and Attitude Change

- Cognitive Consistency
 - keeping various cognitions in relative agreement with one another
- Cognitive Dissonance
 - unpleasant state of tension that develops when people are unaware of entertaining two inconsistent thoughts simultaneously

Cognitive Consistency and Attitude Change

- Bem's self-perception theory
 - we come to know others' attitudes through inference
 - changes in one's behaviour may influence later attitudes

Social Cognition

- Social cognition
 - the process of making sense of other people and ourselves
- Forming social impressions
 - primacy effect - the traits we perceive first often count the most

Social Cognition

- The influence of schemas
 - person schema
 - a set of logically integrated ideas about what a person is like
 - self schema
 - an integrated set of cognitions about you

Social Cognition

- The influence of schemas
 - social stereotype
 - a set of beliefs about the way members of a particular group think and act
 - confirmation hypothesis testing
 - tendency to seek out information that confirms our existing schemas

Social Cognition

- Priming
 - the unconscious activation of a schema
 - moods and emotions
- Self-fulfilling prophecies
 - erroneous assumptions become reality

Attribution Causes to Others' Behaviour

- Causal attribution
 - how people attribute causes to behaviour
- The process of causal inference
 - consistency
 - consensus
 - distinctiveness

Attribution Causes to Others' Behaviour

- Attribution Biases

- The Fundamental Attribution Error

- the tendency to see others' behaviour as being caused by their personalities (dispositional factors) rather than external forces (situational factors)

Attribution Causes to Others' Behaviour

- Attribution Biases
 - The Actor-Observer Bias
 - the tendency for the observer to attribute behaviour to arise from the actor's disposition, and the actor to attribute it to surrounding circumstances

Attribution Causes to Others' Behaviour

- Attribution Biases
 - The Self-Serving Bias
 - the tendency to take credit for successes and find situational excuses for failure
 - self-handicapping

Attraction, Friendship, and Love

- What promotes attraction?
 - Physical attractiveness
 - Proximity and exposure
 - Similarity
 - Perceptions of mutual liking



Attraction, Friendship, and Love

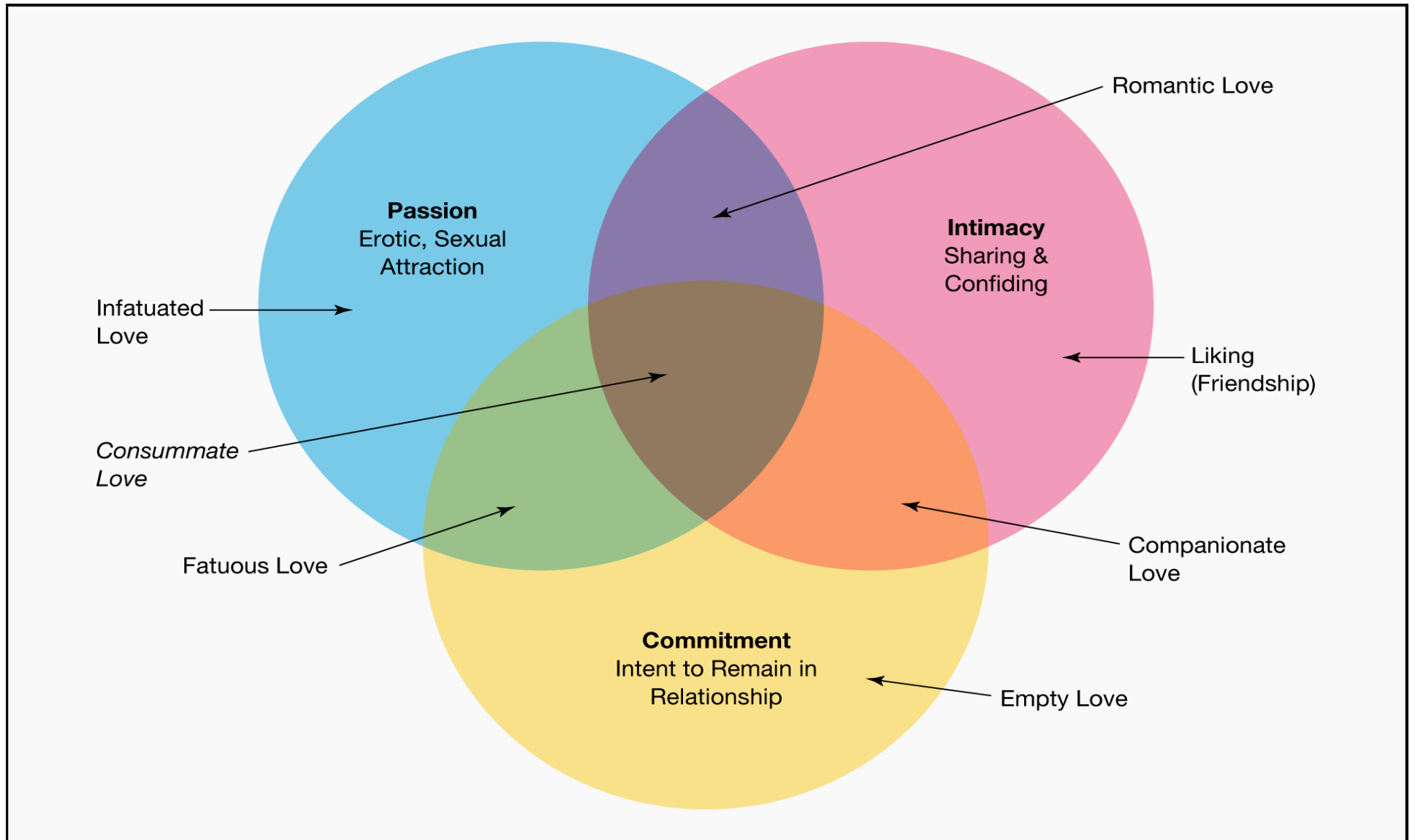
- Three components of loving
 - Intimacy
 - feeling of closeness and connectedness
 - Passion
 - drive to be physically united
 - Commitment
 - decision to be and stay together

Three Types of Love

- Companionate love
 - relationship based on intimacy and commitment but not passion
- Consummate love
 - combination of intimacy, passion, and commitment
- Romantic love



Three Types of Love



The Psychology of Prejudice

– Prejudice

- an inflexible negative attitude toward members of a minority group

– Stereotype

- a preconceived idea of what members of a particular group are like

– Discrimination

- the behavioural expression of prejudice

The Psychology of Prejudice

- Racism
 - prejudice directed toward members of certain racial groups
- Racism explained
 - the authoritarian personality
 - competition and frustration
 - in-groups versus out-groups



The Psychology of Prejudice

- Ways to combat racism
 - equal status
 - proximity
 - cooperation between different groups
 - aggressive policy against racist acts

The Psychology of Prejudice

- Sexism
 - prejudice directed toward one sex, almost always women
- Sex stereotypes
- Why do sex stereotypes endure?

Social Psychology II: Social Influence, Aggression, and Altruism

Going Along With Others

- Types of conformity
 - identification
 - the tendency to go along with others because we admire and wish to be like them
 - internalization
 - the acceptance of others' views and actions as appropriate and right

Going Along With Others

- Factors that influence conformity
 - extent of agreement
 - previous exposure to dissenters
 - anonymity
 - personal traits

Creating Compliance: Common Techniques

- Compliance
 - the act of assent to an explicit request from someone who does not hold authority
- Foot-in-the-door phenomenon
 - small requests before big requests

Creating Compliance: Common Techniques

- Door-in-the-face technique
 - big favour before more realistic request
- Low-ball phenomenon
 - changing conditions after commitment
- That's-not-all technique
 - one concession deserves another

The Social Significance of Groups

- Group
 - a collection of two or more people who:
 - must interact regularly in fairly structured and predictable ways
 - must share one or more specific goals aimed at satisfying certain mutual needs
 - must identify themselves as part of a whole, sharing common fate

Group Effects on Problem Solving and Performance

- Social facilitation
 - the tendency for people's performance to improve in the presence of others
- Social loafing
 - the tendency to slack off when part of a group

Group Effects on Problem Solving and Performance

- Group decision making
 - groupthink
 - poor decision making due to overemphasis on unanimity
 - illusion of unanimity
 - illusions of invulnerability

Group Effects on Problem Solving and Performance

- Minority influence on groups
 - the minority view must be indomitable and abiding
 - minorities stimulate the kind of deep thinking that results in creative and novel solutions

Aggression

- Aggression
 - behaviour that is directed toward intentionally injuring another person who does not wish to be hurt
 - the product of both dispositional and situational factors

Aggression

- Biological influences on aggression
 - aggression appears to be a universal trait
 - aggression differs between individuals but is consistent within individuals

Aggression

- The influences of social learning on aggression
 - aggressive behaviour can be learned
 - people learn how to injure others through exposure to violent models and positive reinforcement for aggression

Frustration and Aggression

- Frustration
 - unanticipated interference with any goal-directed behaviour
- Frustration-aggression hypothesis
 - aggression is always a consequence of frustration
 - frustration always leads to aggression

Altruism

- Altruism
 - unselfish concern for others
- Influences on bystander intervention
 - factors that inhibit helping
 - factors that encourage helping

Altruism

- Influences on other helping behaviours
 - Mood and level of stress
 - Negative state relief model
 - Empathic concern
 - Belief in a “just world”

Altruism

- Influences on other helping behaviours
 - Sociobiological factors
 - is altruistic behaviour “counterproductive”?
 - Situational factors
 - the way people act is shaped to a large extent by the social situations in which they find themselves