

# Self-esteem and impression management

[Business](#), [Management](#)



Consideration of a person's perspective "self" and the processes used to determine behaviors is one element of social psychology. Some of the processes and theories are: impression management, social tuning, social comparisons, mindsets, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This work will examine the basic premises of each of these along with personal examples provided by the author.

### Impression Management

Impression management is the use of conscious or subconscious behaviors by a person to manipulate the others' opinions about them. This can be done in a variety of ways including showering others with praise and compliments and giving gifts with the motivation of developing a favorable opinion of the giver. Adolescence is a phase of life that is particularly susceptible to impression management. When I was twelve years old, my family was transferred from inner city St. Louis to a tiny town of 2,000 people in northeast Arkansas. This town was very elitist and there was very little inroad for "new kids" to find a place of belonging. Almost exclusively, the junior high students had been classmates since kindergarten, and their social in-groups were intact.

There was one girl who reached out to make me feel welcome, and her name was Laura Beth Williams. She had long, curly, strawberry blonde hair, and wore the cutest clothes. Her dad owned a local nursery and she had four sisters. She invited me to sit at her lunch table, told me where to go at lunch time, and gave me insight about teachers and classes. I was so grateful to her that I wanted to do something nice in return, and I also wanted the other

students to think well of me and to consider including me too. One day I took a turquoise ring to school with the intention of giving it to Laura Beth to show my appreciation.

As I thought of what I might do, and the possible responses of my classmates, I was so excited. Then, my excitement incited something that would be my demise. Instead of simply presenting the perfectly lovely piece of costume jewelry, my mind began to create a much more elaborate scenario that snowballed to catastrophe. When we got to our first hour study hall, I made a big deal of making certain that several people saw my ring. As they asked, I told them that my maternal grandfather was a full-blooded Native American (he actually was), and that he had given me this gorgeous piece of turquoise jewelry which I wanted to give to Laura Beth as thanks for her help and welcoming manner.

As I had hoped, the class was impressed and I knew my status was immediately elevated in this new social group. All was well until one of the boys asked to see the ring. As he examined it, I heard an ominous snicker before he loudly announced, “ Hey, Gina, is your grandpa’s name Chief Avon?” Naturally, I was mortified and began to cry and repent about fabricating the story. What is interesting is that from that time forward, the students were much more helpful and welcoming. That was the day that I learned a valuable lesson about lying and trying to impress other people. According to Segev, Shoham, and Ruvio (2013) found that being self-conscious can be positively related with gift giving in adolescence. Adolescents value peer relationships and may give gifts as a way to ensure that they have friends. Social Tuning

Social tuning is the tendency for human beings to be more attracted to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of their own social group. This gravitation toward similar knowledge, customs, and beliefs is one element of the development of culture. My daughter, Nikki, is a typical 20-something American young woman. She has grown up with many of the niceties and luxuries of our country and as most of us are, is a bit spoiled. When she was 22, Nikki answered a call to serve as a teacher-missionary in an orphanage in Honduras. She went to language school in Nicaragua and spent two years teaching elementary students in the mountains near Tegucigalpa.

Upon her return to the U. S., Nikki would often lapse into Spanish, especially when she got nervous or excited, and she loved to go to the Mexican restaurants in town. She said it “felt more like home”. It has been two years since her return, and now Nikki no longer breaks out in Spanish, and she doesn’t frequent Mexican restaurants as often. Although living in Honduras for over two years did not make Nikki a Honduran, social tuning began an enculturation process.

A 2010 study actually showed that there is a psychological and cognitive tendency for people to be more prominent within one’s in-group. The study specifically explored words, paintings, and time pressure. Not only did the study explore reactions to stimulus among those who shared cultural similarities, but the researchers found that the cognition and psychological reaction was lessened when the participants thought that the other participants were unlike them.

Social Comparisons

Human beings naturally compare themselves to other human beings, both individually and corporately. This phenomenon is called social comparison, and it can be either positive or negative. For example, if a person who has had three speeding tickets is comparing their driving record to the driving records of other people, they may feel good about their driving if they have fewer accidents or tickets and bad about their driving skills compared to the person who has never had an accident or a ticket. The comparison actually does not change the person's driving ability, only their perception of their driving ability.

Recent research demonstrates that it is the quality rather than the frequency of social networking experiences that places individuals at risk for negative mental health outcomes. However, the mechanisms that account for this association have yet to be examined. Accordingly, this study examined whether the tendency to negatively compare oneself with others while using Facebook leads to increases in depressive symptoms, and whether this association is mediated by increases in rumination.

A sample of 268 college-age young adults completed an initial online survey and a 3-week follow-up. Path analysis was used to test the hypothesized model, wherein negative social comparison on Facebook was predicted to be associated with increases in rumination, which, in turn, was predicted to be associated with depressive symptoms. The model controlled for general social comparison to test the specific effect of social comparison on Facebook over and above the tendency to engage in social comparison in general.

Results indicated that the hypothesized mediation effect was significant. In sum, in the context of social networking, negatively comparing oneself with others may place individuals at risk for rumination and, in turn, depressive symptoms. Findings increase understanding of the mechanisms that link social networking use to negative mental health outcomes and suggest a continued emphasis on examining the specific processes