

Self-fulfilling prophecy



**ASSIGN
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Self-Fulfilling Prophecy This experiment is all about prejudices, stereotyping and self-fulfilling prophecy. Jane Elliot was trying to demonstrate to a class of 3rd graders how it felt to be discriminated against, judged and made fun of. This all took place the day after Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated in a small Iowa town. The children felt inferior while in the oppressed group because they were told they were lazy, dirty, not smart, can't remember things, and would never amount to anything great. Causing them to feel less important, that maybe they really weren't smart because that is what is being told to them and that is how they are being treated. For someone to be treated like that, for any reason, causes that person to think, " Well, maybe that is true," untimely making them doubt themselves and really feel inferior. These children got to learn first hand just how harsh it is to be the center of discrimination and prejudices. Since people prejudge others based on their external features, society has created stereotypes in which people are assumed to look and act in a certain manner. Stereotypes and prejudices can color our judgments of others at an unconscious level and create a negative evaluation of others based solely on what group they may belong or what color they are. Stereotypes limit our vision of others, they are always potential dangers. For example, Police officers are also more likely to pull over black drivers in expensive cars than white people in expensive cars. However, not everyone recognizes this in their behavior. The fundamental attribution error plays a role in this because, the error is made by people in which they attribute someone else's behavior more to their personality and characteristic than to the situation in which they have been placed. In reality, someone's behavior is actually more likely to be caused by the environment and situation that they have been placed in as opposed to their

personality. The self-fulfilling prophecy explains how one's expectations about another person will eventually lead that person to behave in ways that would confirm these expectations. For example, the kids in Jane Elliot's experiment, the ones that were told they were dirty, not good enough, not smart enough etc... started behaving as if they were all of those things. Therefore, a negative comment and expectation could arouse a negative view of oneself which may lower the self-esteem. For example, if a person were to make a comment that I was irresponsible and expected me to not handle my tasks responsibly; I would then confirm these expectations by acting irresponsibly. By confirming these expectations and behaving in that manner, I am more likely to hold a more negative view of myself which would in turn lower my self-esteem. When people hold a large number of negative stereotypes about certain groups (or people), then they may be more likely to feel negative about themselves. Also, the self-fulfilling prophecy talks about behaving in ways that would confirm people's expectations, making that group (or person) more susceptible to having low self-esteem if they easily confirm those expectations. References Peplau, L. A., Sears, D. O., & Taylor, S. E. (2006). 1. L. Jewell, Ed. Cognitive Theories (12 ed). New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc. Bloom, S. G. (2005, September). Lesson of a Lifetime. Smithsonian Institution. Retrieved March 25, 2007, from www.smithsonianmag.com