Reducing Prejudice: The Target’s Perspective

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In all societies, some individuals are stigmatized—they possess attributes or identities that are socially devalued and denigrated, and that subject them to prejudice and discrimination in some contexts (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). The ubiquity and devastating consequences of prejudice, both for the stigmatized and for society more broadly, have led to a tremendous amount of theory and research on the origins of prejudice. Social psychologists, for example, have theorized that prejudice results from group conflict (e.g., Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961), negative stereotypes (e.g., Hamilton & Sherman, 1994); ingroup/outgroup differences (e.g., Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), threats to the self (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, & Hamilton, 1991), and attempts to justify unequal distributions of power and resources (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993), among other factors.

Theory and research addressing ways to reduce prejudice, in contrast, are far less common. And theory and research addressing the role that the stigmatized themselves may play in reducing prejudice are almost nonexistent (for exceptions, see Eberhardt & Fiske, 1996; Kirk & Madsen, 1989). The current chapter ventures into this uncharted territory by considering prejudice reduction from the perspective of the stigmatized. Our goal is to present a conceptual framework for thinking about how targets of prejudice might help to reduce prejudice. This framework is grounded in theories of stress and coping as well as social psychological theories of the origins of prejudice.

We believe that psychologists have ignored the target’s potential role in prejudice reduction for several reasons. First, it is often more difficult to study prejudice from the perspective of the stigmatized than it is to study it from the perspective of members of the dominant group—in part because members of
stigmatized groups tend to be less accessible to researchers than are members of the dominant group. Second, we suspect that many psychologists find this perspective politically incorrect, if not downright distasteful. To ask what a target can do to reduce prejudice raises the specter of “blaming the victim”—after all, prejudice is not the victim’s fault, so he or she should not be expected to take any responsibility for reducing it. Third, many psychologists probably believe there is nothing much that targets can do to reduce prejudice directed against them. Because victims of prejudice generally have less power and resources than those who are intolerant of them, they are not regarded as influential agents of interpersonal or social change.

However, the stigmatized are frequently in positions where they must contend with, and can potentially act on, prejudice. The stigmatized also are most directly and negatively affected by prejudice; hence, they have the most to gain by reducing it. For these reasons, targets of prejudice are likely to be highly motivated to reduce prejudice. Furthermore, contrary to traditional views of social interaction that portray targets as passive victims of perceivers’ expectations, stereotypes, and prejudices (e.g., Merton, 1948; Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968), more contemporary views emphasize the impact of the target’s self-views, goals, and motives on their interactions (e.g., Deaux & Major, 1987; Swann, 1984). For example, when targets have strongly held self-conceptions, they are unlikely to behave in ways that confirm perceivers’ expectancies, or to change their self-beliefs as a result of perceivers’ expectancies, and they may even alter perceivers’ erroneous beliefs about them (e.g., Major, Cozzarelli, Testa, & McFarlin, 1988; Swann & Ely, 1984; Testa & Major, 1988). Contemporary views of the target’s role emphasize resilience to stereotypes and prejudice, rather than powerlessness (Crockett & Major, 1989). These perspectives portray targets as active agents who play a role in shaping their interactions with prejudiced perceivers. Thus, despite the obstacles to research that were mentioned above, we believe that the absence of attention to the target’s perspective on prejudice reduction has left important theoretical and practical questions ignored.

A COPING PERSPECTIVE ON TARGETS’ RESPONSES TO PREJUDICE

In this chapter we use psychological models of stress and coping (e.g., Bandura, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) as a framework for understanding how targets may reduce prejudice in their interactions with prejudiced perceivers (see also Miller & Major, in press). These models view people as active agents who attempt to manage stressful life events and the emotions associated with those events. In these models, two central mediators of how individuals respond to potentially stressful events are cognitive appraisals and coping.
to researchers than are members of many psychologists find this distasteful. To ask what a target of "blaming the victim"—after all, should not be expected to take reduce prejudice directed against they have less power and resources e not regarded as influential agents in positions where they must con- cede. The stigmatized also are most therefore, they have the most to gain prejudice are likely to be highly mo- nitory to traditional views of social victims of perceivers' expectations, (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968), 98; of the target's self-views, goals, (Major, 1987; Swann, 1984). For conceptions, they are unlikely to tor, or to change their self- may even alter perceivers' etta, & Mclntire, 1988; re views of the target's rather than powerless- n targets as active prejudiced perceivers, above, we believe on prejudice reduction 10. The Target's Perspective on Reducing Prejudice Bandura (1982) conceptualized cognitive appraisals as self-efficacy be- liefs—beliefs an individual holds about whether he or she can achieve mastery over the environment. These self-efficacy beliefs are hypothesized to direct the ways that individuals attempt to cope with potentially stressful events. Two types of cognitive appraisals are central in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory. Primary appraisal involves the individual's evaluation of whether he or she has anything at stake in an encounter—for example, whether there is a potential for harm, benefit, or loss. Secondary appraisal involves the individual's evaluation of his or her coping resources (e.g., perceived control, social support) and of options for overcoming or preventing harm or improving the prospects for benefit. Events are appraised as stressful when primary appraisals of threat exceed secondary appraisals of coping abilities (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel- Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986).

Coping is defined as a person's "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 141). Coping efforts are process-oriented and context-specific, and are distinguished from the outcomes of coping efforts (i.e., whether or not they are successful in achieving their goal). A key assumption of these models is that there is no one "best" coping strategy that is effective for all people in all situations. Rather, the effectiveness of different coping strategies differs, depending upon the person, the situation, and the person's goals. These goals may be to alter or eliminate the problem that is creating the perceived stress (i.e., problem-focused coping), or to regulate stressful emotions (i.e., emotion-focused coping—Folkman et al., 1986). Although these forms of coping are often treated as if they are mutually exclusive strategies, research indicates that people often engage in problem-focused and emotion-focused coping efforts simultaneously (Folkman et al., 1986).

We believe that theories of coping with stressful life events provide a fruitful framework for analyzing prejudice reduction from the target's point of view. A schematic diagram of our proposed framework is shown in Figure 10.1. This model starts with an individual who is objectively the target of prejudice because of possessing some devalued attribute or social identity. This target individual is exposed to someone who expresses derogatory social attitudes or cognitive beliefs, exhibits negative affect, or displays hostile or discriminatory behaviors toward him or her (Brown, 1995). We propose that the likelihood that a stigmatized target will be motivated, and able, to reduce the prejudice of a perceiver depends upon the target's appraisals of the prejudice to which he or she is exposed, and the types of coping efforts he or she employs. These appraisals and coping efforts are shaped by a variety of factors, including characteristics of the target, characteristics of the perceiver, and characteristics of the situation, as well as the target's goals in the situation.
In this chapter, we first discuss the role of appraisals in targets' responses to prejudice, and then discuss specific problem-focused coping strategies that targets might use to reduce prejudice. Within this discussion of coping strategies, we consider five major theories of prejudice and ask what each theory offers to targets as potential prejudice-reduction coping strategies. We next discuss factors that moderate how targets appraise prejudice and the coping strategies they use to reduce it. We conclude with a discussion of the costs and benefits of various strategies of prejudice reduction from the target's point of view.

**Appraisals of Prejudice**

Imagine a situation in which an African American customer shopping in a department store is put under extra surveillance by the store manager because the manager believes that African Americans are likely to steal merchandise. Can the customer reduce the prejudice of the store manager, and if so, how?

Before making any attempt at prejudice reduction, our customer must first perceive himself as a target of prejudice, that is, he must appraise the store manager's scrutiny as indicative of prejudice. Although some scholars suggest that the stigmatized are vigilant to signs of prejudice and discrimination in others (Allport, 1954; Goffman, 1983), several sources of evidence suggest that this is often not the case. Members of oppressed social categories often fail to see injustice in their personal situations (Crosby, 1984; Jost & Banaji, 1994; Major, 1994), and they typically perceive less discrimination directed against themselves personally than against their group as a whole (e.g., Crosby, 1982; Guilmond & Dube-Simard, 1983; Major, Levin, Schmader, & Sidanius, 1999; Taylor, Wong-Reiger, McKinman, & Bercusson, 1982).

There are several reasons why the stigmatized may not see themselves as targets of prejudice. First, prejudice is often ambiguous. Although blatant dis-
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plays of "old-fashioned" prejudice (i.e., hostility and hate) do still occur, the more common modern forms of prejudice are subtle (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Kinder & Sears, 1981; McConahay, 1966), making it difficult for targets to decipher whether or not negative outcomes involve prejudice (Crocker & Major, 1989). Second, because of social comparison biases, especially tendencies to compare themselves with similar, or ingroup, others, the stigmatized are often unaware that they are being treated worse than members of other groups (Major, 1994). Third, even when the stigmatized become aware that they or their group are disadvantaged relative to others, endorsement of ideologies that justify the social hierarchy may preclude them from labeling their disadvantaged treatment as due to prejudice (see Major, 1994). For example, Crocker, Cornwell, and Major (1983) found that overweight women who were rejected by a male partner blamed their rejection on their weight but did not blame it on the partner's prejudice. Finally, labeling oneself as a target of prejudice has intrapsychic costs, including acknowledging that one is a victim and not in control of one's outcomes (Crocker & Major, 1994; Crosby, 1984; Major, 1987). Thus, returning to our example above, there are various reasons why our African American customer may not appraise his treatment by the store manager as due to prejudice.

Even when the stigmatized do appraise themselves as having been a target of prejudice, this will not necessarily result in efforts to reduce this prejudice. Primary and secondary appraisals of the prejudicial event are critical. In our example above, the responses of the customer (assuming he perceives himself as a target of the store manager's prejudice) depend upon his primary appraisals of the personal significance and gravity of the encounter (i.e., "Is this prejudicial act harmful enough to me that it warrants me putting forth effort to change it?") and his secondary appraisals of the options available to him (e.g., "I could confront the manager...write a letter to the company...organize a protest in front of the store"), and his resources for implementing those options. These primary and secondary appraisals are shaped by several factors. For example, prejudice is more likely to be appraised as a threat if the perceive has power over the target, or controls important resources that the target desires or needs, or the prejudice occurs in a domain that is central to the target (Paterson & Neufeld, 1987). Targets are more likely to feel they have the resources to cope if they perceive they have some control in the situation and have social support from others (e.g., Cohen & Wills, 1985; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). We will return to a discussion of factors that moderate cognitive appraisals, as well as coping efforts, later in the chapter.

Coping with Prejudice

Assuming our hypothetical customer perceives the store manager's actions as prejudicial and appraises those actions as a threat, what can he do to reduce the manager's prejudice? Research on coping indicates that people use a variety of
strategies to cope with situations they appraise as threatening. As noted above, these include strategies focused on reducing the problem that is causing the stress (the perceived prejudice), as well as strategies focused on managing stress-related emotions. Which type of strategy our customer is likely to use depends upon his secondary appraisals—i.e., his appraisals of his coping options, abilities, and resources.

Problem-Focused Coping. The target may engage in two forms of problem-focused coping. First, he can engage in coping efforts aimed directly at reducing or destroying the prejudicial attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of others. This type of prejudice reduction, if successful, has more global and enduring results for the target. Examples of such strategies might include directly confronting the store manager with evidence of her bigotry, or writing letters to the newspaper about the evils of racial profiling. These strategies aimed at prejudice destruction are what come to mind for most of us when we think of what it means to reduce prejudice.

Targets’ efforts to reduce the problem of prejudice, however, can also be more situation- and relationship-specific. In particular, a second way a target may reduce prejudice is by trying to reduce the likelihood that he or she will be treated in a prejudicial way by a particular perceiver in a particular encounter. Examples of such strategies might include portraying oneself to a prejudiced perceiver in a counter-stereotypical manner (e.g., our customer could whistle Mozart while he shops), or attempting to forge a common identity with a prejudiced perceiver that will override prejudicial tendencies (e.g., our customer could comment to the store manager that based on their attire, they both appear to be Buffalo Bills fans). These are strategies of prejudice deterrence, for their aim is to deter others from treating the target in a prejudicial way. Although these strategies may be successful for a target in a particular relationship and situation, they are likely to leave the prejudiced perceiver relatively unchanged in her interactions with other members of the target’s group.

Emotion-Focused Coping. Targets can also attempt to reduce prejudice by diminishing the emotional impact of prejudice. These strategies can be thought of as strategies of prejudice deflection, because they aim not to reduce prejudice directly, but rather to deflect its impact on the self. Examples might include devaluing the importance of a domain in which one has experienced prejudice, dismissing the significance of others who have acted in a prejudicial way, or discounting the validity of their opinions, all of which can maintain self-esteem in the face of prejudice (see Crocker & Major, 1989). Because emotion-focused coping with prejudice has been considered in depth elsewhere (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989; Crocker et al., 1998; Major & Crocker, 1994), and because it does not reduce the problem of prejudice, we limit our discussion in this chapter to the problem-focused strategies of prejudice destruction and prejudice deterrence.
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Two important factors that determine the type of problem-focused coping strategies that targets will attempt are their goals in the interaction, and their theories of the origins of prejudiced responses in a given perceiver and/or relationship. These two factors are discussed next.

Individual Versus Collective Goals and Coping Strategies

One important determinant of targets' coping strategies is whether their prejudice reduction goals are individual or collective. If targets' goals are largely individual, they are more likely to engage in coping strategies that aim to reduce prejudice and discrimination directed against themselves personally. If targets' goals are collective, they are more likely to engage in coping strategies that aim to reduce prejudice directed against their group. Reducing prejudice on an individual basis is often essential for individual advancement, yet individually-oriented strategies have many shortcomings. Most notably, individually oriented strategies have limited utility in changing prejudicial attitudes and behaviors toward a group as a whole, and thus must be repeated time and time again with different prejudiced perceivers and in different situations. Collective attempts at prejudice reduction, in contrast, allow perceivers to generalize more tolerant attitudes to the group as a whole, and are more effective at changing institutionalized prejudice and discrimination—often the most difficult and impactful type of change to achieve. Thus, targets' most effective and enduring route to reducing prejudice is to use collective problem-focused strategies.

Nevertheless, collective efforts to reduce prejudice are rare. For example, when asked what actions they would take against sex discrimination, the majority of women say that collective action (e.g., participating in a protest) is the type of action that should be taken, but the majority also say that individual action (e.g., filing a personal complaint) is what they actually would do (Taylor & Dubé, 1986). Collective actions to reduce sex discrimination are rare even among women who are high in the belief that women as a group are discriminated against (Foster & Matheson, 1998). Even when they are made aware that gaining access to higher status groups is severely restricted for members of their group, members of low status groups still prefer to engage in individual action strategies (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990).

One reason that targets of prejudice so rarely engage in collective action is that it typically requires immense personal sacrifices of money, time, and relationships on their part. Women who file sexual harassment or sex discrimination charges, for example, often report experiencing tremendous interpersonal rejection and personal costs as a result (Fitzgerald, Swan, & Fischer, 1995). Thus, although collective efforts yield many advantages for the group and are most likely to result in enduring reduction of prejudice, individual efforts aimed at reducing prejudice directed against the self are the most common way in which targets attempt to reduce prejudice.
INDIVIDUAL COPING STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING PREJUDICE

In this section we consider various types of strategies that individual targets might employ to reduce prejudice directed against themselves personally in encounters with prejudiced perceivers. In particular, we consider five major theoretical perspectives on prejudice and what each suggests as the best strategies that targets can use to reduce prejudice against them personally. As will become apparent, these theories make very different predictions as to what a target should do.

Prejudice Results from Negative Stereotypes

Many theories suggest that negative stereotypes hold about social groups form the foundation of prejudice and discrimination (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). These theories thus imply that reducing prejudice requires altering stereotypes. One approach is for targets to try to eliminate (destroy) the negative stereotypes that others hold about their group. Alternatively, the target might attempt to prevent (deter) prejudiced perceivers from applying their negative stereotypes about the target's group to the individual target. Attacking the expression of prejudice at the level of stereotypes, however, is a daunting task. Stereotypes are largely automatic in their occurrence (Hamilton & Sherman, 1994) and, as such, often are not under the control of the perceiver, can occur without the conscious awareness of the perceiver, and require little investment of cognitive resources (Devine, 1989). Stereotypes also serve a cognitive efficiency function (Fiske & Taylor, 1991), and are highly resistant to change (for a relevant review: see Hamilton & Sherman, 1994). Consequently, attempting to reduce prejudice by destroying others’ stereotypes is a formidable task.

Deterring prejudiced perceivers from applying their negative stereotypes to oneself is potentially a more promising route. Brewer (1996) argued that application of a stereotype to an individual has two necessary steps. The first requirement is that a stereotype must exist in the mind of a perceiver, and the second is that the individual must be placed in the stereotyped category. Therefore, although the stereotype itself may be largely unchangeable, the target may attempt to reduce prejudice by avoiding placement into a stereotyped category. There are three options suggested by the literature that may reduce either the activation of the stereotype, the categorization of the target, or the application of the stereotype to the target in a dyadic interaction. These are: activate a more positive subtype, highlight cross-cutting category memberships, and reduce one's fit to the stereotype mold.

Arguably, the least optimal of these three stereotype-based strategies is the use of positive subtype categories. Many negatively stereotyped groups contain subgroups that have a more positive stereotype, for example: the African American athlete or musician. These subcategories are as stereotyped as the su-
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perordinate category, but by activating this positive subgroup stereotype, and encouraging the perceiver to categorize him or her in the subgroup, the target may be able to avoid the prejudice and discrimination that results from the negative stereotype about the superordinate category. The interaction with the perceiver would still be based on stereotypes, but the outcome might be less negative for the target. Toward this end, targets could, for example, display identity symbols associating themselves with respected or well-liked subgroups of their superordinate category. By highlighting their similarity to, and aligning themselves with, a positive subgroup, targets might remove themselves from association with many negative attributions.

This strategy, however, is less than appealing. By creating exceptions to the rule, subcategories can serve to maintain the overarching category stereotype (Weber & Crocker, 1983). In using this strategy, the target may induce the perceiver to treat him or her as an exception, and may achieve a specific positive outcome. However, the target will probably fail to alter the overarching stereotype and the prejudice of the perceiver. Thus, while this strategy may be useful for an individual target in a specific interaction to reduce prejudice directed against him or her, it is not apt to be effective in changing the stereotype or reducing the prejudice of the perceiver towards the target’s group.

A second strategy for the target is to create cross-cutting category memberships (Doise, 1978). This involves the simultaneous activation of two categories, the second of which crosses group boundaries—e.g., simultaneous activation of one’s ethnicity and one’s occupation. If these categories are equally salient, then the perceiver may not react to the target based on the negative stereotype of one category. Research indicates that cross-cutting category memberships do have the potential to reduce expressed prejudice (Deschamps & Doise, 1978). However, only certain types of alternative categories may elicit the desired effect of prejudice reduction (Brewer, Ho, Lee, & Miller, 1987). Optimaliy, the target should attempt to make salient a cross-cutting category of which the perceiver is also a member. In this manner the target can be assured that the category has some positive valence for the perceiver and may be a dominant or higher status category for the perceiver. Again, this strategy reduces the target’s personal experience of prejudice in particular interactions with particular perceivers, but does not eliminate the perceiver’s prejudice toward the target’s group.

Perhaps the most ideal of the stereotype-based strategies is for the target to avoid categorization altogether, thereby forcing the perceiver to process him or her in terms of individuating information rather than on the basis of group membership. Although there is potential for this strategy to result in subtype, its goal is for the target to be treated as an individual rather than as a category member. However, because categorization is a basic cognitive function, this may be difficult to achieve.

Strategies aimed at reducing prejudice through reducing categorization, utilizing positive subtypes, or emphasizing cross-cutting category memberships are
all strategies of prejudice deterrence. These strategies do not destroy the prejudice of the perceiver; however, they may allow an individual target to achieve a desired outcome in a particular circumstance.

Prejudice Results from Threat

A second set of theories argues that prejudice stems from the need to maintain self-esteem (Pyszczynski et al., 1991) or, more broadly, the integrity of the self-concept (Steele, 1988). According to these theories, threats to self-esteem or the self-concept result in defensive derogation of outgroup members. For example, social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and terror management theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1991) posit that derogation of outgroups serves to maintain the value of the ingroup and thus, through our group identification, our own self-value. In a similar vein, self-affirmation theory (Steele, 1988; Steele & Liu, 1983; Steele, Spencer, & Lynch, 1993) holds that individuals faced with threats to the self can restore positive self-evaluation by affirming central values through the derogation of different others. As well, Stephan and Stephan (1985, 1996) suggest that the perception of threat in intergroup interactions (either realistic threats or threats to values) gives rise to anxiety, which in turn results in increased stereotyping and prejudice.

Consistent with these theories, research has shown that perceivers exhibit an increased propensity to derogate or stereotype lower-status others following a threat to the self (Fein & Spencer, 1997; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Rosenblatt, 1990), and that this outgroup derogation can protect self-esteem (Chin & McClintock, 1993; Lemyre & Smith, 1985). In contrast, affirming the self through writing about important values (Fein & Spencer, 1997), or by having important values validated by a member of the outgroup (Greenberg et al., 1990), reduces the expression of prejudice toward outgroups.

These theories suggest two strategies for reducing a perceiver’s prejudice: affirming central values of the perceiver, and/or raising the self-esteem of the perceiver. By opening up a discussion with a prejudiced perceiver about important self-affirming values, or by expressing agreement with important self-affirming aspects of his or her world view, a target may effectively deter a perceiver from prejudice or discrimination in a given situation. The target may also attempt to bolster the perceiver’s self-esteem—for example, by praising or complimenting him or her—thereby negating the need for the perceiver to derogate the target to maintain self-value. In short, threat-based theories of prejudice suggest that, by providing prejudiced perceivers with the opportunity for self-affirmation, or by boosting their self-esteem, a stigmatized target may be able to reduce the likelihood of experiencing prejudice in interactions with that perceiver. Although these strategies sound repugnant, they are time-honored self-presentation strategies for gaining power and influencing others (Carnegie, 1937; Jones & Pittman, 1982). By using them, a stigmatized person may be able
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to take control of the interaction and get what he or she needs, at least in the short-term.

Prejudiced Perceivers Feel Ambivalence and Conflict

A third theoretical perspective on the origins of prejudice is that it arises out of ambivalence and conflicting belief systems (Devine, 1989; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Katz & Hass, 1988; also see chapters by Devine et al. and Dovidio et al. in this volume). Theories relevant to this view posit that modern forms of racism and prejudice are characterized by holding both positive and negative feelings toward members of other groups. For example, Devine’s (1989) dissociation model of prejudice distinguishes between stereotypes, which are activated automatically when one encounters an outgroup member, and the attitudes or evaluations that are intentionally brought to mind either to support or refute the content of the stereotype. Thus, low prejudiced individuals are differentiated from high prejudiced individuals, not by the content or possession of negative stereotypes, but by the beliefs that are called forth to counteract that stereotypic information.

A similar model based on ambivalence is Gaertner and Dovidio’s (1986) notion of aversive racism. Aversive racism, they maintain, is an attitudinal ambivalence resulting from deeply ingrained negative attitudes toward ethnic minority groups, combined with beliefs about egalitarianism. Whereas Devine and Gaertner and Dovidio would suggest that negative attitudes toward other groups are derived from the activation of negative stereotypes, Katz and Hass (1988) assert that White Americans’ negative attitudes toward African Americans, in particular, are derived from deeply held beliefs about individualism that conflict with social policies and programs aimed at compensating Blacks for past social transgressions. They suggest that many White Americans possess ambivalent attitudes toward racial minority groups such as African Americans, because American culture breeds attitudes about equality for all people as well as a firm conviction that those who work hard deserve better rewards.

These three views are similar in that they all suggest that one coping strategy that targets might use in an effort to destroy or deter prejudice is to take advantage of ambivalence by reminding perceivers of their egalitarian beliefs so that those beliefs will then direct their behavior with the stigmatized target. This process of prejudice reduction can also be construed in terms of cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), because the intent is to induce attitude change (or compensatory behaviors) by revealing to the perceiver the discrepancy between her prejudicial attitudes or behaviors and her deeply held beliefs about egalitarianism and humanity. As Devine (1989) has demonstrated, even low prejudiced individuals may make prejudicial judgments about a target under conditions that prevent egalitarian beliefs from overriding the automatic activation of negative stereotypes. Because prejudiced behaviors are sometimes
automatic, this sort of prejudice may not be consciously recognizable as such by the perceiver. The target, however, may be more likely to appraise the action as prejudicial and may communicate this appraisal to the perceiver. Thus, targets may help to destroy a person's prejudicial behaviors, or at least to deter prejudice within a given situation, by inducing dissonance for the perceiver who considers herself to be nonprejudiced. Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) also posit that making people aware of subtle forms of prejudice can be a useful strategy for reducing their occurrence.

Although we are not aware of research examining how perceivers respond when targets of their prejudice confront them with discrepancies in their belief systems (e.g., a stigmatized person making a perceiver aware that her negative attitudes towards gays do not mesh with her belief that she is nonprejudiced), there is evidence that this strategy is effective when used by an ingroup authority figure. Specifically, Rokeach (1973) demonstrated in a series of studies that college students who initially reported having negative attitudes toward African Americans developed more positive attitudes after a college instructor made them aware of a discrepancy between their views of themselves as fair and democratic individuals and their more global views about the relative importance of the values of individual freedom versus equality for all. Furthermore, Kirk and Madsen (1969) pointed out that this strategy may be particularly effective at destroying and deterring prejudice because it leads to an association between acting prejudicially and feeling shame or guilt. Indeed, work by Monteith and Devine demonstrates that people who are low or moderate in prejudiced beliefs do experience feelings of guilt when they are reminded of how their behavior disagrees with their beliefs (Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991; Monteith, 1993). Those who hold highly prejudiced beliefs, however, do not experience those same feelings of compunction, suggesting that this strategy may be ineffective with them.

**Prejudice Results from Perceived Differences**

A fourth theoretical perspective on the origins of prejudice is that it is a consequence of perceiving others as different from oneself or one's group. According to self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987), for example, people define the boundaries of ingroups and outgroups by seeing those who share similar characteristics as belonging to the same group. Social identity theory builds on this description of how groups are defined by asserting that intergroup conflict is born out of a need to differentiate one's ingroup from outgroups in a favorable direction (Tajfel, 1978).

These theories imply that prejudice can be destroyed or deterred if the perceived differences between people can be minimized or overshadowed by perceived similarities. If a target of prejudice can be seen as part of the perceiver's
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Ingroup, the target will benefit from ingroup biases and be perceived in a more favorable manner. Dovidio and Gaertner (1993) use the term recategorization to refer to the process whereby two distinct groups are recategorized into one larger group, which may have superordinate goals that supplant the goals of the two separate groups. For example, in Sherif et al.'s (1961) classic Robber's Cave study, more positive intergroup perceptions were elicited when two rival teams of boys were faced with situations that required them to combine their efforts to overcome obstacles. Recent research confirms that perceiving two groups as combining under one inclusive group identity is an important mechanism in reducing intergroup biases (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Validzic, 1998; also see Dovidio et al., this volume).

Given these benefits of recategorization, one prejudice-reduction coping strategy that targets might use is to highlight a superordinate goal that is shared by themselves and by prejudiced perceivers. For example, a female police officer who is having difficulties with prejudiced male coworkers might reduce their prejudice by reminding them that they and she share a similar concern for fighting crime. As discussed earlier, this strategy also creates cross-cutting categorizations that might reduce the extent to which negative stereotypes are used in evaluating a target.

Another way that these theories suggest for targets to attempt to reduce prejudice is by displaying signs and symbols that emphasize or create a shared identity between the target and the prejudiced perceiver, because this shared identity will minimize perceived differences. Bourhis and Giles (1977; Bourhis, 1979; Giles & Powesland, 1975), for example, assert that language is often used strategically by groups of individuals who adopt and maintain idiosyncratic modes of communication in a way to differentiate themselves from other groups. Intergroup interactions often lead members of one group to differentiate their communication patterns from those of other groups (Taylor & Royer, 1980). In contrast to this pattern, individuals who are motivated to do so can create a shared identity in a given intergroup encounter by converging their mode of speech and nonverbal behavior to that of the outgroup (Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987). Thus, in individual encounters with prejudiced perceivers, targets might be able to reduce their experience of prejudice by matching their own communication styles to those of their perceivers (e.g., by using a regional accent or terminology). There is some evidence that such a strategy may be effective at deterring and perhaps even destroying prejudice. For example, Gallois and Callan (1988) found that Australians perceived immigrants to their country more favorably to the extent that the immigrants used nonverbal behaviors that are prototypical of Anglo-Australians. In addition, perceptions of ethnic outgroup members are further enhanced when perceivers believe that outgroup members' attempts at communication convergence are motivated by a desire to break down barriers between the groups (Simard, Taylor, & Giles, 1976).
These coping strategies suggest that, for a target to deter or destroy prejudice, she may have to give up or set aside the identity of her ingroup in order to assimilate to the majority outgroup. However, recent research on majority group perceptions of ethnic minority group members suggests that this may not be necessary. van Oudenhoven, Prins, and Buunk (1998) asked members of minority (Turkish and Moroccan immigrants) and majority groups in the Netherlands to read descriptions of minority group individuals who had adopted one of four modes of cultural adaptation outlined by Berry (1980). These four modes constituted the four possible combinations of being identified versus not identified with one’s own ethnic minority group and being identified versus not identified with the ethnic majority group. The research results revealed that most of the minority participants saw themselves as persons who had integrated themselves into Dutch society while also maintaining their minority identification. Furthermore, members of the Dutch majority held as favorable opinions of immigrants who adopted this coping strategy as they did of those who had given up their minority heritage and completely assimilated themselves into Dutch society. Majority group members had the least favorable opinions of ethnic immigrants who retained their minority identity and eschewed majority culture. Unfortunately, however, the findings also showed that majority group members overestimated the extent to which immigrants adopted this separatist approach. Thus, as difficult as it may be, maintaining identification both with one’s own group and an outgroup may be an adaptive coping technique for deterring or destroying prejudicial attitudes held by outgroup members, although getting the outgroup to perceive one’s identification with their group may be a challenge.

Most of the coping strategies described so far to create a common identity should help foster more favorable opinions of a specific target in the mind of a specific perceiver during an isolated interaction. They are thus more beneficial for deterring specific acts of prejudice than for destroying prejudice more broadly. There is an additional coping strategy that might have the further benefit of extending positive opinions of an individual target to other members of the target’s group as a whole. Specifically, targets may be able to aid in the destruction of prejudicial attitudes against their group by seeking out friendships and alliances with outgroup members (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). By doing so, they create real shared identities that cross-cut group boundaries (cf. Brewer, this volume). Furthermore, when prejudiced individuals find themselves liking individual members of a disliked outgroup, they are faced with an imbalance in their relationships that may be reconciled by developing more positive opinions of the group as a whole (Heider, 1946, 1958). Recent research provides support for this hypothesis by demonstrating that attitudes toward an outgroup do become more favorable when perceivers observe friendships forming between members of the ingroup and the outgroup (Wright, et al., 1997).
Prejudice Results from Unequal Distribution of Power and Resources

A fifth theoretical perspective on the origins of prejudice is that it results from the unequal distribution of resources and status within society, and in particular from a need to justify or legitimize that inequality (Allport, 1954; Hegel, 1807/1966; Fanon, 1963). This approach is consistent with research on the need for belief in a just world (Lerner, 1980), on outcome biases (Allison, Mackie, & Messick, 1996), and on cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). For example, the need to believe in a just world is hypothesized to lead people to assume that those who have less power, wealth, and status than others must have done something bad, or have some negative attribute, that leads them to deserve their lower status. Likewise, those who have more than others must have done something good, or have some positive attribute, that causes them to deserve their position of relative advantage. According to cognitive dissonance theory, rationalizations and stereotypes resolve the dissonance aroused by the inequality of resource allocation.

More recent theories that share this perspective on prejudice include system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994) and social dominance theory (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). According to Jost and Banaji (1994), group stereotypes develop to rationalize and legitimize inequality and discrimination. These stereotypes are endorsed by those lower in the status hierarchy, as well as those higher up, and hence they maintain the status quo. Social dominance theory proposes that social hierarchy and inequality are inevitable, and that oppression and prejudice result from societal attempts to diffuse and prevent group conflict (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). Legitimizing myths (e.g., belief in a meritocracy; belief in a just world) are created to ensure that the social hierarchy is widely accepted by all social groups, and with this acceptance comes stability and perpetuation of the status quo.

These theories imply that in order for stigmatized targets successfully to reduce prejudice against them, they must first redistribute resources by gaining positions of power and status. Because of perceivers’ needs to justify the (new) status hierarchy, they will shift to more favorable opinions of stigmatized targets who have successfully gained more power and resources. That is, perceptions of inputs will be revised upwards to justify or explain attained outcomes. For example, a perceiver who encounters a target in a relative position of power will be inclined, due to outcome biases or the need to justify the status hierarchy, to attribute her achievement to her merits. The successful use of this strategy by an individual target involves gaining positions of power and status—clearly a formidable task since the target must contend with prejudice and discrimination in order to do so. Nevertheless, according to theories of prejudice that focus on justification of status positions in society, those who gain positions of higher status
may reduce others' prejudice directed against themselves, and potentially, against other members of their group.

Summary

In summary, different theories of the origins of prejudice lead to different recommendations for ways that a target might destroy or deter prejudice in others. Theories that prejudice results from stereotypes offer the possibilities of activating a positive subtype or a cross-cutting category membership. Theories that prejudice results from threats to the self make the discomfiting recommendation to praise or affirm the perceiver. If prejudice results from perceiver's ambivalence or conflict, reminding perceivers of their egalitarian values may be the best route for prejudice reduction. If perceived differences are the root of prejudice, then emphasizing similarity with the perceiver, through signs and symbols and shared goals, is probably the strategy of choice. Finally, theories that suggest that prejudice results from justification of the status quo propose the daunting strategy of gaining a position of relative power and status.

MIXERS OF PREJUDICE APPRAISALS AND COPING EFFORTS

Thus far, we have outlined several different strategies that targets might use to destroy, deter, or deflect prejudice. The likelihood that a target will employ any of these coping strategies, as well as the probable effectiveness of those strategies, depends upon how prejudice is appraised by the target. These appraisals are shaped by several factors that can be roughly organized under characteristics of the target, the perceiver, and the situation. We briefly discuss some of these moderating variables in the following section.

Characteristics of the Target

Perceived Control over the Problem. An important moderator of targets' appraisals and coping efforts is the extent to which targets perceive themselves as having some control over the problem of prejudice. Perceived control is a key component of self-efficacy and secondary appraisals (Bandura, 1982; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and it directs the extent to which individuals adopt either problem-focused or emotion-focused coping strategies (Folkman et al., 1986). Thus, targets who believe that they have some control over a perceiver's level of prejudice or expression of prejudice are more likely to engage in strategies that aim directly to destroy that prejudice or deter its expression. Targets who perceive themselves as having little control, in contrast, are more likely to engage in emotion-focused strategies of prejudice deflection. To return to our example of the African American shopper, if he perceives that he has control over the man-
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... prejudice lead to different recognition or deter prejudice in others. ... is offer the possibilities of activating membership. Theories that consider the discomforting recommendation results from perceivers' ameliorating egalitarian values may be the differences are the root of prejudice, through signs and symbols choice. Finally, theories that suggest status quo propose the dauntless and status.

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ager's application of a negative stereotype, he may alter his dress, speech, or other salient signs and symbols to avoid being viewed stereotypically.

*Perceived Control over the Stigma.* Targets of prejudice also differ in the extent to which they perceive themselves as having control over their stigmatizing attribute. People whose stigma is perceived as controllable are held more responsible for it, both by others and by themselves (Crandall & Martinez, 1996; Weiner, Perry, & Magnusson, 1988). The perceived controllability of a stigma can prevent members of stigmatized groups from seeing themselves as targets of prejudice, in part because they view their negative treatment as legitimate (Crocker et al., 1993; Crocker & Major, 1994; Major & Schmader, in press). Thus, people who believe that their stigmatizing condition is under their own control are more likely to try to reduce prejudice by using strategies that focus on changing themselves (e.g., losing weight, having plastic surgery, becoming more educated), rather than on reducing prejudice in others (see Miller & Major, in press). If successful, these strategies should allow individuals to avoid being categorized as part of a stigmatized group, and thus to avoid being negatively stereotyped as well.

Targets who do not perceive their stigma to be controllable, on the other hand, may try to destroy prejudice in others by convincing them that the stigma is uncontrollable. For example, some members of the lesbian and gay male community try to fight homophobia by educating the public about the possible genetic origins of homosexuality and downplaying the view that it is a lifestyle choice. Reducing the perceived controllability of a stigma in perceivers' eyes can lead them to respond to the target with less anger and more compassion (Weiner et al., 1988).

**Stigma Concealability.** In addition to variation in the extent to which stigmas can be controlled, there is also variation in the extent to which they can be concealed. An individual who is unable to change her status as a member of a stigmatized group might, if feasible, attempt to hide that group membership from others. Concealing a stigma from a prejudiced perceiver can reduce exposure to prejudice by maintaining the illusion of perceived similarity to the perceiver, evading being negatively stereotyped by the perceiver, and avoiding direct acts of discrimination in social interactions.

Interestingly, for those who possess a concealable stigma, the decision to conceal or reveal it achieves very different goals. For example, take a man who is gay. Obviously, one way for him to avoid direct prejudice and discrimination from others is to avoid disclosing his sexual orientation. Because concealing a stigma can be effective on the individual level, this strategy will often be adopted. Concealing one's stigma, however, will not destroy prejudice more broadly. Concealing one's sexual orientation, for example, may even have unfavorable effects on prejudice reduction toward gays and lesbians as a group, because the larger consequence of concealment is an under-representation of the...
frequency of people in the population who are gay and lesbian. The resulting belief that the stigma is rare may exacerbate the perception that possessing that mark is somehow deviant and undesirable. Consequently, for those who share the same concealable stigma, one collective approach to reducing prejudice against their group is to encourage people possessing that stigma to reveal themselves to others. In fact, this strategy has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community to demonstrate to straights, and to gays, that homosexuality is not an unusual lifestyle adopted by only a rare "type" of person.

In addition to reducing the perceived deviance of a stigma, revealing concealable stigmas can also work to change attitudes toward stigmatized groups in general, by increasing the perceived similarity among diverse people. This can occur both by creating imbalances between current relationships and existing group attitudes and by making perceivers aware of cross-categorizations that they did not know existed. For example, when a person who is prejudiced against Jews learns that one of her most liked colleagues is Jewish, the dissonance produced by that imbalance of evaluations may lead her to reevaluate her opinion of Jews. Furthermore, the content of the perceivers's already-formed and favorable impression of her colleague, and the positive stereotype of their shared ingroup, might enter into and adjust the content of the stereotype held about the stigmatized group more generally—in this example, Jews might now be perceived as good workers and friends.

Collective Identity. Another important characteristic of the target that affects appraisals and choice of coping strategy is the extent to which the target has a sense of group, or collective, identity. Stigmatized individuals differ in the extent to which they have a sense of themselves as a member of a stigmatized group. Some stigmas are strongly associated with a group or collectivity, whereas others are not. For example, African Americans and gay males and lesbians are usually viewed as members of a collective group, whereas the facially disfigured and the overweight are not. Targets of prejudice also differ in their attachment to the group upon which prejudice is based. The perception that one has a common fate with members of one's group (i.e., that one's own individual outcomes are linked to the outcomes of others) is an essential component of a collective identity (Gurin & Townshend 1986; Rabbie & Horwitz, 1988; Rabbie, Schot, & Visser, 1989). Those who have a highly developed collective identity are more likely to adopt collective efforts at prejudice reduction than are those who do not. Indeed, many scholars argue that a collective identity is a necessary component for collective action (Gamson, Fireman, & Rytina, 1982; Melucci, 1989). Thus, targets who are high in collective identity may appraise prejudice against their group as more personally significant than targets who do not feel a strong sense of collective identification.

Collective identity is more likely to lead to collective action if it is accompanied by a sense of collective efficacy. Collective efficacy refers to the belief that
problems can be solved and lives can be improved through concerted effort
(Bandura, 1982), and it has been shown to relate positively and consistently to
social activism (Forward & Williams, 1970; Marsh, 1977; Muller, 1972, 1979).
Gamson et al. (1982) argued that targets of prejudice who adopt what they
called a "collective action frame" will view collective action as a more viable and
desirable option. Collective action frames consist of the concepts of injustice
(others' intention to bring about harm to you or members of your group), identity
(the definition of a "we" in conflict with "they"), and agency (belief in the possibility
of improving conditions through collective action).

Characteristics of the Perceiver

Targets' appraisals and coping efforts, and the effectiveness of those efforts,
also will vary depending on the nature of the prejudiced perceiver. Three different
types of perceivers have been identified by Kirk and Madsen (1989): "intransigent
bigots," "ambivalent skeptics," and "well-meaning friends." Intransigent
bigots are individuals who have malicious and deeply held prejudicial attitudes.
These "old-fashioned" or "redneck" racists are unlikely to change their prejudicial
beliefs. Thus, strategies aimed at altering stereotypes, increasing perceived
similarity, or inducing ambivalence in belief systems are likely to be ineffective
with this type of perceiver. Ingratiation or activating a positive subtype might be
more viable strategies, but they too are unlikely to result in a change of attitude
or improved treatment. Some of these attempts to destroy or deter prejudice
among perceivers who hold highly prejudicial attitudes can actually backfire,
resulting in increased prejudice among these individuals (Devine et al., this vol-
ume; Myers & Bishop, 1970). Consequently, targets may be reluctant to try to
reduce prejudice among these types of perceivers, and may resort instead to
emotion-focused coping strategies when forced to interact with such individuals.
Collective strategies of prejudice reduction may be the only way to reduce preju-
dice among intransigent bigots.

"Well-meaning friends" are low prejudiced individuals who are sensitive to
the predicament faced by specific targets of prejudice, and who are likely to feel
compunction (Devine et al., 1991) when discrepancies between their strongly
held egalitarian values and the uncontrolled influence of stereotypes become
apparent. Thus, strategies aimed at making egalitarian beliefs salient should
be most effective with this group. Well-meaning friends, according to Kirk and
Madsen, should be mobilized and encouraged to support the target group's efforts.
Because people's attitudes and behaviors are most influenced by members of
their same reference group (Merton, 1957), well-meaning friends can be a strong
source of influence in prejudice reduction appeals aimed at others in their same
group.

The third group of perceivers identified by Kirk and Madsen (1989) are "am-
bivalent skeptics." Ambivalent skeptics display modern forms of prejudice—
aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) and ambivalence (Katz, 1979; Katz & Hass, 1988)—wherein they hold negative feelings toward certain target groups but at the same time subscribe to egalitarian values that conflict with these negative emotions. Research by Katz and his colleagues (Katz & Hass, 1988; Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986) has shown that the ambivalence these types of individuals feel leads to extreme, unstable, and highly variable responses to targets. Ambivalent skeptics have the capacity for change, and targets should appraise prejudice reduction efforts aimed at these individuals as well worth the effort. Unlike well-meaning friends, however, skeptics do hold negative attitudes. Therefore, by directing prejudice reduction efforts toward these skeptics, targets do not waste their efforts on those who are already sympathetic to their cause. Targets may be able to make the greatest strides in prejudice reduction by appealing to ambivalent skeptics, reminding them of their egalitarian beliefs, and emphasizing similarities between their respective groups. In fact, this approach may even work with some prejudiced individuals whom targets view as intransigent bigots, but who nonetheless subscribe to some egalitarian values.

Characteristics of the Situation

Several important aspects of the situation can affect targets’ appraisals of prejudice and their efforts to cope with it. First, the power of a prejudiced perceiver over the target is likely to be a critical determinant of the target’s appraisals and coping efforts. Targets who are in a low-power position relative to a perceiver should be particularly likely to appraise the prejudice as threatening and should be particularly motivated to try to reduce prejudice in their interactions with the perceiver. However, they may be in the weakest position to do so. Direct attempts to destroy prejudice in a perceiver are potentially risky for a target who depends upon that perceiver for necessary outcomes. For example, it is likely to be highly desirable, yet also highly risky, for a female manager to attempt to directly reduce her male boss’s sexism. In contrast, there is less risk, but also less motivation, for an African American shopper to attempt to directly reduce the prejudice of a store manager if the store manager has no power over him. An implication of this reasoning is that, for targets who are in a low-power position relative to the prejudiced perceiver, the most effective strategies for deterring prejudice may be indirect strategies such as validating the perceiver’s beliefs, values, and self-esteem.

A second situational factor that affects targets’ appraisals and coping efforts is the anticipated duration of the relationship between the target and the perceiver. Targets are likely to be more motivated to reduce the prejudice of perceivers with whom they expect to have a relationship of some duration than when they expect the relationship to be brief. For example, targets are more likely to be motivated to reduce the prejudice of their coworkers than of strangers. However, because directly confronting another person’s prejudice may
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damage the relationship with that person, targets may be more likely to adopt indirect strategies with someone they interact with regularly than with someone they interact with only briefly. For example, strategies aimed at emphasizing superordinate goals or cross-cutting relationships might be more effective for destroying or deterring prejudice in prejudiced colleagues with whom the target must interact frequently.

A third situational factor that can affect targets’ appraisals of various prejudice reduction efforts is perceived opportunities for change in the situation. If the differences between target and perceiver groups are perceived as unstable, targets will be more likely to appraise the benefits of prejudice reduction attempts as outweighing the costs (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and to have a sense of efficacy that change can be achieved. This sort of instability in the status hierarchy is likely to facilitate collective action among members of stigmatized groups.

COSTS AND BENEFITS OF PREJUDICE REDUCTION STRATEGIES FOR THE TARGET OF PREJUDICE

In this chapter, we have distinguished between strategies geared toward deflecting, deterring, or destroying prejudice. Prejudice deflection strategies aim, not to reduce prejudice directly, but merely to diminish its negative emotional impact on oneself. Prejudice reduction strategies try to reduce or destroy the prejudiced beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors of others; while prejudice deterrence strategies attempt to deter others from treating oneself prejudicially. These strategies may be used in the service of different goals, but they may also be employed simultaneously in the service of a single goal.

These different strategies have different costs, as well as different benefits, for the target of prejudice. Prejudice deflection, which primarily involves emotion-focused coping strategies, avoids the possible personal and social costs of attempting to change the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors of other individuals. Such strategies, however, are unlikely to have the potential benefit of improving the treatment of oneself or one’s group by prejudiced others. Nevertheless, in some situations, targets may only be able to cope with prejudice in emotion-focused ways. Such situations, we have argued, are especially likely to be those in which the target feels that he or she has little control relative to a powerful perceiver.

Prejudice destruction and deterrence strategies are both problem-focused methods of coping, aimed at reducing the occurrence of prejudice. They also have differences in their risks and rewards—differences that center on the impact and scope of prejudice reduction. Targets who attempt to destroy prejudice focus on eliminating the occurrence of prejudice broadly. The benefits of this approach include the potential for improved treatment of the target and of his or her stigmatized group—not only in a specific encounter or with a specific perceiver, but also across a variety of situations and perceivers. Although the benefits of...
attempting to destroy prejudice are high, so are the costs. Prejudice destruction requires a high level of effort, often prolonged over time, and also the possible sacrifice of personal safety if one is faced with extremely prejudiced perceivers.

Attempting to deter prejudice, on the other hand, has fewer costs. When a target attempts to deter prejudice, he or she tries to reduce the likelihood that a perceiver will treat him or her in a prejudicial way in a specific encounter. This approach is unlikely to be as dangerous as the prejudice destruction approach. The potential benefits, however, are also unlikely to be as high. Because prejudice deterrence strategies do not directly challenge the attitudes, values, and beliefs of the perceiver, but rather work around them to achieve a temporary positive outcome, the resulting benefits may be unlikely to generalize to other perceivers or situations.

Costs and benefits also differ based on whether the target’s goal in a prejudice reduction strategy is individual or collective. One key benefit of individually focused efforts is the possibility of individual advancement. It is almost always easier for an individual target to reduce prejudice against himself or herself than to change attitudes toward their stigmatized group as a whole. Yet, when targets advance individually, especially through methods that separate them from their stigmatized ingroup (e.g., recategorization, positive subtyping), prejudice against their group remains intact. In contrast, by participating in collective action, targets can not only improve their personal situation, but also reduce the plight of others who share their stigma. Collective action often has high costs, such as the need for organization, resources, commitment, communication, personal sacrifice, and effort over time. Nevertheless, it may be the best way to combat institutionalized prejudice and discrimination, and to create more tolerant attitudes that will generalize to the group as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS

We have attempted to describe in this chapter strategies that targets of prejudice might use to reduce prejudice against themselves or their group—strategies of prejudice deflection, deterrence, and destruction. Our approach has been guided by theory and research on coping with stressful life events, and informed by theories of the origins of prejudice. We have described prejudice reduction strategies that are logically derived from social psychological theories of prejudice, and we have done so without regard to their palatability or feasibility.

Any type of prejudice reduction effort has risks. Certain strategies we have outlined here (e.g., boosting a prejudiced perceiver’s self-esteem, avoiding categorization altogether, assimilation to the perceiver’s group) carry a high risk to the integrity and self-esteem of targets. Other strategies (e.g., gaining status and power so as to induce a revision of attributions or stereotypes about oneself or one’s group) are neither easily implemented nor highly feasible. Nonetheless, we
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create more tolerant atti-

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believe that each of these strategies is likely to be employed at some time
some situations by targets of prejudice who are attempting to cope with if
predicament.

Our intent here has been to outline what social psychological theories predict
that targets can do to combat prejudice in prejudicial interactions, rather than
endorse a particular type or set of strategies. The risks and benefits of the
various approaches to prejudice reduction are ultimately borne by the targets.

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