

COM 370

WHY IS THERE RESISTANCE TO CHANGE?

Selected Classical Explanations from Social Science

I. Central vs. peripheral beliefs (Milton Rokeach/Kurt Lewin)

- Central beliefs define the self
- Central beliefs are highly resistant to change
- What are your own central beliefs?
- How may central beliefs be changed? By making them more peripheral. . . only through environmental control:
UNFREEZE ◦ ◦ CHANGE ◦ ◦ REFREEZE
(UNLEARN) (LEARN) (REINFORCE)

II. Locus of Control (J. Rotter)

<u>Internal Locus</u>	vs.	<u>External Locus</u>
Independent		Dependent
Feels s/he has power over destiny		Feels powerless over own destiny
More likely to change		More likely to <u>be</u> changed

- Anomie: A sense of alienation that results from a perceived lack of control over one's environment
- Fatalism: The belief that humans are powerless to change events, in that they are predetermined
- Individual vs. system blame

III. Fear appeals (S. Feshbach & others)

- "Boomerang" Effect? (High fear=low persuasion?)
- Not that simple. . . in fact, everything being equal, more fear is more effective than less fear. But fear is not enough; there must be:
 - A. Perceived probability of occurrence (saliency)
 - B. Efficacy of recommended action and of self

IV. Psychological filters or defenses (from Cognitive Dissonance theory, Leon Festinger)

- Four levels of filtering
 - A. Selective exposure
 - B. Selective attention
 - C. Selective perception
 - D. Selection retention

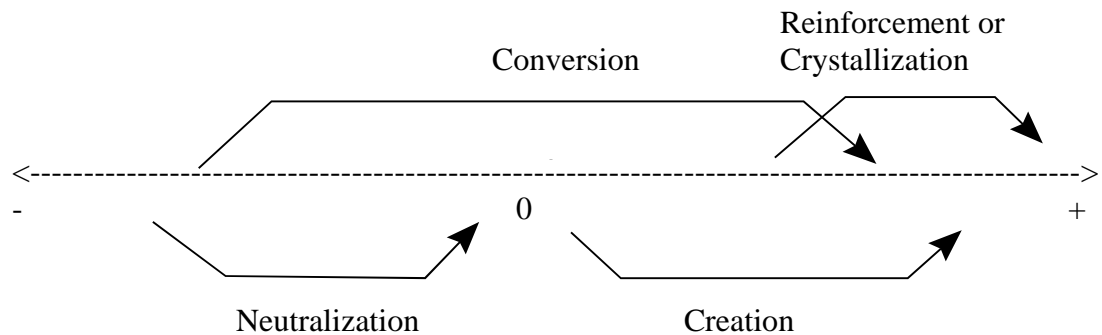
V. Taboos

- Normative communication practices and behaviors, viewed as very private and personal. . . society dictates that it's unacceptable. . . you simply don't do or say it!
- Taboos vary with time, place, participants.
- A Typology of Taboo:

		Communication Taboo?	
		Yes	No
Behavioral Taboo?	Yes		
	No		

VI. Types of attitude change (M. Fishbein & others)

- First, how does one define attitude?
- A continuum of attitude:



- Easiest--reinforcement; Hardest--conversion

VII. Information Overload

- Rogers mentions this as a problem for change agents; but it's also a problem for targets

VIII. Expectancy Theory

- Expectancy theory first developed in industrial and organizational psychology
- One subset of research has found that violations of expectations generally result in negative affect
- Expectancy violation theory (EVT), adapted by J. Burgoon for the study of interpersonal communication, suggests that when an individual's expectations about the behavior of others is violated, the individual will react either positively or negatively, depending upon whether the violator is deemed attractive or unattractive

EXAMPLE: Male pregnancy.

Which Resistance to Change theories and perspectives seem to apply?