

Chapter 13 Essential Questions

1. There are two important theories on how we develop emotional experiences. The first theory is the James- Lange Theory. It is the theory that our experience of emotion is our awareness of our physiological responses to emotion –arousing stimuli. For example, we cry because we are sad, tremble because we are afraid and smile because we are happy. Our feelings of something follow our body’s response. Body reactions are important because they are how we label emotions. For example, a knot in our stomach when we are by someone we like it means love, however, if we have a knot in our stomach for a big test it means we are nervous. Later on George Hohmann believed part of James- Lange theory was correct in that body emotions are important when perceiving feelings/thoughts. Hohmann interviewed twenty-five soldiers who suffered injuries in World War II. The people with injuries below the waist had very little change in emotional intensity. On the other hand, the people with injuries below their neck had a sharp decrease in emotional intensity. The emotions expressed in body areas above the neck are felt more intensely by the people with high spinal- cord injuries. The second theory is the Cannon-Bard Theory. This theory states that an emotion-arousing stimulus simultaneously triggers (1) physiological responses, and (2) the subjective experience of emotion. The physiological response is when you run away and the emotional experience is what you feel during the response. Cannon believed the body’s responses were not distinct enough to evoke the different emotions. That one could not cause the other. He believed that the two happened simultaneously.

Furthermore, there is the topic of whether we consciously interpret and label our emotions. There are many psychologists that believe our cognitions-our perceptions, memories, and interpretations are an important ingredient of emotion. Stanley Schachter came up with the two-factor theory which states that to experience emotion one must (1) be physically aroused and (2) cognitively labels the arousal. Schachter along with James and Lange supposed that our experience of emotion grows from our awareness of our body’s arousal. Schachter also believed in what Cannon and Bard said that emotions are physiologically similar. Schachter’s view came down to an emotional experience requires a conscious interpretation of the arousal. In 1962 Schachter and Jerome Singer performed an experiment with college men and injecting them with hormone epinephrine to get them aroused. The discovery of the experiment was that a stirred up state can be experienced as one emotion or another very different one, depending on how we label it and interpret it. Later on Robert Zajone argued that our emotional reactions can be quicker than our interpretations of a situation; therefore, we feel some emotion before we think. When the amygdala is active we don’t think about the situation or have time to decide, we just do it. Then, Richard Lazarus agreed that our brains process and react to vast amounts of information without our conscious awareness. He states that some emotional responses do not require conscious thinking. However, even instantaneously felt emotions require some sort of cognitive appraisal of the situation; otherwise, how do we know what we are reacting too. Emotions arise when we appraise an event as beneficial or harmful of our well being. Highly emotional people are intense

because of their interpretations. They tend to personalize events as being somehow directed at them, and they generalize their experiences by blowing single incidents out of proportion.

2. Emotions are both psychological and physiological. Much of the physiological activity is controlled by the autonomic nervous system's sympathetic (arousing) and parasympathetic (calming) divisions. Our autonomic nervous system controls our arousal. The sympathetic division then directs the adrenal glands atop the kidneys to release the stress hormones epinephrine (adrenaline) and nor epinephrine (nor adrenaline). The surge then in epinephrine and nor epinephrine increases heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature and blood sugar levels. In addition, facial muscles and brain electricity changes; these are the physiological changes that accompany our emotions.

When two emotions are similarly arousing and negative (or positive) the physiological responses that accompany them are nearly indistinguishable to an untrained observer. Such as the emotions fear, anger and sexual arousal. However, scientists have discovered subtle differences in activity in the brain's cortical areas, in use of brain pathways, and in secretion of hormones associated with different emotions. Emotions also differ in the brain circuits they use. As people experience negative emotions such as disgust, and when they have generally negative personalities, they show more brain activity in the right prefrontal cortex than in the left. Depression-prone people also show more right frontal activity. People with positive emotions and personalities-alert, energetic, and persistently goal-directed adults- show more activity in the left frontal lobe than in the right. The lefts frontal lobes rich supply of dopamine receptors may help explain why a peppy left hemisphere correlates with a perky disposition. Even though all emotions are different they generally have similar autonomic arousals.

3. Much of our communication is through the body's silent language. Body language includes eye connection with others, facial expressions, eyebrow movement, body positioning, and so on. Psychologists have studied people's abilities to detect emotion, even from thin slices of behavior. By exposing different parts of emotion-laden faces, Robert Kestenbaum discovered that we read fear and anger mostly in the eyes and happiness from the mouth. Some of us however are more sensitive than others to these cues. Women are better at reading people's emotions than men are and their nonverbal sensitivity gives them an edge for spotting lies. Women are also able to express their emotions more easily than men. The society accepts females to cry or get upset however, men are suppose to be strong and only do it in private.

Although some gestures are culturally determined, facial expressions, such as those of happiness and fear, are common over the world. In communal cultures that value interdependence, intense displays of potentially disruptive emotions are infrequent. Otto Klineberg (1938) discovered that in China their emotions are very different. In China burping at the dinner table shows the chef respect. In addition, when they are mad they laugh but it is an uncomfortable laugh.

Expressions do more than communicate emotion. They also amplify the felt emotion and signal the body to respond accordingly. Emotions, then, arise from the interplay of cognition, physiology, and expressive behavior. Expressions not only communicate emotions but we can also amplify and regulate them. People, especially women, are good at manipulation which is

when they mimic what the other person feels. For example, if a friend is upset because her and her boyfriend just broke up and she is explaining the story to you, seeing your friend upset will put you in that upset mood as well. People, especially women, also imitate the situation as well. Acting as another acts helps us feel what another feels. Another example could be when you tell yourself to consciously frown. Without knowing, within an hour or so, you will begin to develop negative feelings; maybe grumpiness or anger, just because of your frowning. Thus, I can conclude that facial expressions do influence our experience of emotions.