Breaking the Prejudice Habit:
Allport's "Inner Conflict" Revisited
Patricia G. Devine

Many chapters in Allport's *The Nature of Prejudice* leave readers with the impression that prejudice is rather commonplace and essentially guaranteed by virtue of both how the mind works and how society is structured. For example, early chapters revealed prejudgment and categorical thinking to be ordinary, if not necessary, cognitive processes. In still other chapters, prejudice was observed to be woven into the fabric of society and individual learning histories, if not the fundamental structure of personality. Ordinary and normal, however, do not imply acceptable – and this fact is the starting point for Allport's analysis of what he referred to as *inner conflict*. To the extent that one views prejudice as deplorable, these ordinary processes can lead to troubling intrapsychic outcomes.

Allport's Views on Inner Conflict

In recognition of the very real possibility that prejudice may be viewed as unacceptable, Allport opened the "Inner Conflict" chapter, chapter 20, with the following observation: "The course of prejudice in a life seldom runs smoothly. For prejudiced attitudes are almost certain to collide with deep-seated values that are often equally or more central to the personality" (1954/1979, p. 326). The types of deep-seated values that create problems for prejudice are those of fairness, justice, and the humane treatment of others as prescribed by the American Creed and Judeo-Christian values – values that Allport claimed are integral in our socialization as Americans. To the extent that people subscribe to these values, possessing group-based prejudices would by definition collide with them and would reveal those with such prejudices to be hypocrites. Being exposed as a hypocrite is, according to Allport, discomforting to people. More than simply discomforting, Allport anticipated that this type of inner conflict would lead to

the experience of prejudice with *compunction* (i.e., accompanied by shame, guilt, and regret). Such self-inflicted punishment Allport believed would serve as a powerful motivating force to reduce the conflict. He cautioned, however, that the process of resolving the conflict would be both difficult and fraught with internal tension.

Historical Context: Questioning the Morality and Legality of Prejudice

It is important to place Allport's observations in the historical, social, and political context in which experiences of prejudice with compunction arose. The world was still reeling from the events of the Second World War in which unspeakable atrocities were perpetrated against Jews *because* they were Jews. The Holocaust, largely viewed as a crime against humanity, led many Americans to seriously question the morality of group-based prejudice. How could the nation fight against such crimes against humanity while, on its own soil, entire groups of people were denied rights and opportunities because of their skin color? Quite simply, the American Creed, although revered in the abstract, was being violated in practice.

Legislators and lay-people alike had long being struggling with these issues. In 1896, for example, the Supreme Court, in the case of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, handed down a ruling that undermined racial discrimination while affording segregation by establishing "separate but equal" facilities (e.g., schools, water fountains, restaurants) for White and Black Americans. Over time, however, it became evident that "separate but equal" was a fiction that was fundamentally at odds with the constitutional proclamation that "all men [*sic*] are created equal." Indeed, in the same year that Allport published his book, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown vs. The Board of Education* that separate is inherently *unequal* and, in 1955, they decreed that schools should be desegregated with "all deliberate speed." These decisions legitimized remediation for race-based educational discrimination and, in tandem with the Civil Rights Legislation of the 1960s, they contributed to a social and political context in which group-based prejudice was questioned on both legal and moral grounds.

Allport's Inner Conflict: Prejudice with Compunction

Against the backdrop of the American Creed and an emerging social context that discouraged overt expressions of prejudice, Allport noted that

although prejudice without compunction may exist among true bigots, more common was the experience of prejudice with compunction. To illustrate the power of this conflict, Allport reviewed anecdotal evidence abstracted from essays written by college students and suburban women concerning their experiences with and attitudes toward minority groups in America. Indeed, Allport was struck by what he referred to as the almost bewildering inconsistencies observed in these essays. With each example cited, the reader easily gets caught up in the conflict as people explain how they actually often express biases and then quickly explain that they know they shouldn't express or wished that they didn't express them. Consider just one example: "Every rational voice within me says the Negro is as good, decent, sincere, and manly as the white, but I cannot help but notice a split between my reason and my prejudice" (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 327). Indeed, as the essayists confess to the injustice (and often irrationality) of their biases, their tension is palpable. Abstracting from these anecdotal examples, Allport concluded that "defeated intellectually, prejudice lingers emotionally" (p. 328). Allport was impressed by the essayists' self-insight, but was careful to note that self-insight is a necessary but insufficient step toward overcoming prejudice; instead, it serves as a prelude to a period of conflict during which self-dissatisfaction with one's biases will motivate efforts to reduce the conflict and bring one's responses in line with one's values.

Developments Since Allport

A great many years passed following the publication of Allport's book before social psychologists took up the issues explored in the "Inner Conflict" chapter. Eventually, however, these issues came to occupy the center of contemporary discussions concerning both the nature of prejudice and efforts to overcome prejudice.

The impetus to revisit Allport's discussion of "inner conflict" was an effort to address a perplexing set of research findings concerning expressions of prejudice in the wake of the legislative and normative changes that made overt expressions of prejudice both illegal and socially taboo. Social scientists were struggling to explain the disparity between people's reports of their racial attitudes (i.e., what they say) and their behavior (i.e., what they do; see Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980). That is, although White Americans often reported relatively positive attitudes toward Black Americans on surveys, their behaviors often belied these statements and revealed substantial evidence of prejudice – perhaps direct evidence of the "split

between reason and prejudice." These findings served as the cornerstone for modern theories of prejudice (see also Sears, ch. 21 this volume). Each theory offers a different analysis of the reasons why people may withhold overt expressions of race bias in response to social norms that proscribe prejudice. Allport's discussion of strategies for handling inner conflict anticipated, at least indirectly, some of these modern conceptions of prejudice.

Repression of Inner Conflict and Aversive Racism

Allport noted that one way to obviate the need for conscious attention to or distress over inner conflict was to *repress* evidence of it. This strategy reflects a denial of prejudice within the self. For example Allport noted that "no one wants to be at odds with his own conscience" (Allport 1954/1979, p. 334). An important component of repression as a strategy for handling conflict is that in deploying it, people fail to recognize their prejudices. According to Allport, repression is a protective rather than truly effective resolution of the conflict and leaves people vulnerable to responding with prejudice and, hence, inner conflict.

This line of reasoning has conceptual parallels in Gaertner and Dovidio's (1986) analysis of aversive racism, which proposes that many White Americans simultaneously hold anti-Black feelings and a sincere belief that people should be treated equally (see also Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). Although these negative feelings are largely disavowed and consequently unacknowledged by many White people, they are nevertheless activated during interactions with Black people. This juxtaposition of prejudice and egalitarianism leads to *aversive racism*, such that the conflict between simultaneously-activated prejudiced and egalitarian views causes aversive feelings, such as discomfort, unease, and sometimes fear. Aversive feelings can motivate people to avoid future interactions with Black people in order to avoid evoking negative emotions.

Defensive Rationalization

Whereas the repression strategy represents a wholesale disavowal of prejudice, Allport identified other strategies that drew on people's flexible cognitive processes to construe evidence to fit with preferred preconceptions. These strategies, Allport suggested, involve *defensive rationalizations*. Defensive rationalizations do not truly resolve the conflict, but rather allow people to make sense of inconsistencies by marshalling evidence to justify negative

views of outgroup members. People can, for example, selectively cite examples to support negative views of outgroup members while simultaneously ignoring or distorting contrary evidence. Such selective consideration and interpretation of "evidence" enables people to maintain the illusion that they are objective and fair-minded. For example, evidence of a highly accomplished Black person who contradicts the stereotype of Blacks as lazy is easily handled by viewing that individual as the "exception that proves the rule." Contemporary authors refer to this process as subtyping (Rothbart & John, 1985). Once subtyped, the person no longer threatens the validity of stereotypic thinking. Allport recognized that this strategy enables people to recognize their negative beliefs but to view them as valid rather than prejudiced. The contemporary literature is replete with examples of the deployment of such strategies to maintain stereotypes and prejudice (see Fiske, ch. 3 this volume).

Alternation and Ambivalent Racism

Explaining away inconsistent evidence can be challenging and requires a vigilance that may be taxing to social perceivers. An alternative strategy is to accept negative beliefs about outgroup members as valid while simultaneously viewing oneself as egalitarian and fair-minded. Because these views are likely to collide, Allport suggested that people who use this type of strategy would need to *alternate between their conflicting views of outgroup members*. Indeed, Allport suggested that this was likely the most common strategy used to address the threat of inner conflict because it allowed people to maintain a fair and just self-concept yet still respond in prejudiced ways. Using this strategy, people vacillate between their egalitarian values and their prejudiced beliefs based on situational factors that make one or the other salient.

Katz and Hass (1988; Katz, Wackenhut, & Hass, 1986) developed this theme and provided evidence for what they referred to as *ambivalent racism*, defined as the simultaneous possession of positive and negative attitudes toward Black people. Katz and Hass argued that people's pro- and anti-Black attitudes were derived from their commitment to alternative values cherished by Americans, humanitarianism and Protestant Work Ethic values, respectively. Katz and Hass (1988) developed two separate measures to assess respondents' positive and negative attitudes. They found that *anti*-Black attitudes were correlated with beliefs in the Protestant Work Ethic (the idea that personal success is gained through hard work and self-reliance), whereas *pro*-Black attitudes correlated with humanitarianism and

egalitarianism. The authors hypothesized – and found – that highly ambivalent people were prone to extreme pro- or anti-Black responses, depending on the situation. For example, in situations emphasizing egalitarianism, ambivalent racists were particularly positive toward Black people, whereas in situations emphasizing the merits of self-reliance, they were especially harsh toward Black people (Katz et al., 1986).

According to Allport, none of the above strategies provides a true or effective resolution of inner conflict. Instead, each of these strategies and their contemporary theoretical counterparts explain how the conflict between thought and action remains intact and nonthreatening. Hence, they are explanations for how prejudice persists rather than how prejudice is reduced. Each of the modern theories, for example, presumes that in the context of normative pressure, people's prejudices are forced "underground," such that they are expressed in subtle, indirect, or covert ways. Thus, prejudice does not truly decline; rather, the form in which prejudice is expressed is changed.

In this regard, none of these approaches offer insights into strategies for prejudice reduction. Allport recognized, however, that for some people, overcoming rather than circumventing prejudice was the overarching goal. For example, Allport (1954/1979) noted that some people are likely to find their defenses wanting such that "they can neither repress, rationalize, nor compromise with any comfort" (p. 338). These people are aware of, and do not hide from, the conflict between their values and their actions. Indeed, awareness of the conflict is a prerequisite to overcoming prejudice. According to Allport, successful resolution of inner conflict – true prejudice reduction – requires taking stock of one's biases and doing the hard work to achieve an integrated personality in which there is consistency between values and actions. The true resolution or prejudice reduction theme was taken up in another of the modern approaches to understanding the disparity between verbal reports of people's attitudes and covert indicators of prejudice (Devine, 1989). And in our unfolding program of research, a modern analysis of inner conflict and efforts to achieve its true resolution are found.

A New Framework: Automatic and Controlled Processes in Prejudice

In developing an analysis of how nonprejudiced beliefs and prejudiced thoughts may coexist within the same individual, Devine's (1989)

dissociation model of prejudice drew on the distinction between automatic and controlled cognitive processes. My goal was to provide a theoretical analysis of how those who sincerely renounce prejudice may remain vulnerable to unintentional activation of stereotyped thoughts and prejudiced feelings. To do so, I recast Allport's "internal conflict" as reflecting a struggle between automatic and controlled processes. According to the model, whether people are consciously prejudiced or not, they are vulnerable to the automatic activation of the cultural stereotype of African Americans. This type of automatic stereotype activation is a legacy of our common socialization experiences and occurs without people's consent or bidding. The model assumes that adoption of nonprejudiced beliefs or values does not immediately eliminate automatic prejudiced responses. Importantly, the model does not presume that people who adopt egalitarian values hide from or deny automatic biases; instead, the biases are recognized, viewed as unacceptable, and motivate corrective efforts. Provided low-prejudice people have sufficient time and cognitive resources available, they will use controlled processes to censor automatic processes and respond on the basis of their nonprejudiced beliefs.

In developing this analysis, I argued that eliminating prejudice "as a first response" requires overcoming a lifetime of socialization experiences, which, unfortunately, promote automatic prejudice (Devine, 1989). I likened the process of overcoming prejudice to the breaking of a bad habit in that people must make a decision to eliminate the habit and then learn to inhibit the habitual response. Thus, the change from being prejudiced to nonprejudiced is not an all-or-none event, but unfolds as a process during which those who have renounced prejudice remain vulnerable to the conflict engendered between automatic negative responses and consciously endorsed nonprejudiced beliefs – a conflict that has been well-established in recent years (see Blair, 2001, for a review). In the following section, the consequences of this conflict for prejudice reduction are considered.

Prejudice with Compunction Revisited

Although Allport assumed that the essayists who reported inconsistencies between their "reason and their prejudice" experienced compunction, this assumption was first tested directly by Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, and Elliot (1991). Their empirical strategy was to assess how people who vary in self-reported level of prejudice believe they *should* respond in interpersonal situations involving minority group members, and how they actually *would* respond in these same situations. On average, low-prejudice people

believe that they should not feel uncomfortable sitting next to an African American on a bus, but that they likely would. High-prejudice people disagree, indicating that is it acceptable to feel uncomfortable in this situation. Devine et al. also measured people's affective reactions to the match or mismatch between their *should* and *would* responses. The critical items focused on the extent to which people felt guilty, self-critical, and regretful – in short, the compunction Allport believed to be associated with inner conflict.

When actual responses were discrepant from people's personal standards, Devine et al. (1991) found that low-prejudice people experienced compunction but high-prejudice people did not. Moreover, the greater the violation of nonprejudiced standards, the more guilt low-prejudice people reported. For low-prejudice people, then, the conflict between their *should* and *would* reactions threatens their nonprejudiced self-concepts and they hold themselves personally accountable for these failures. In tandem with considerable similar evidence (for a review, see Devine & Monteith, 1993), it appears that many people are embroiled in the arduous process of prejudice reduction. Further, in line with Allport's prescient observations, the adoption and internalization of nonprejudiced standards is clearly only the first step in breaking the prejudice habit. As outlined below, subsequent work has directly addressed the processes involved in breaking the prejudice habit, with a specific focus on control and regulation of automatic processes that give rise to prejudiced responses.

Breaking the Prejudice Habit: "Putting the Brakes on Prejudice"

During the period of conflict in which people struggle with the inconsistencies between their values and their prejudice, Allport presumed that guilt would engender efforts to bring responses and values in line. People would, in effect, "put brakes upon their prejudices" (Allport, 1954/1979, p. 332). Allport was not terribly specific about how this would occur, merely suggesting that people "do not act [their prejudices] out – or act them out only to a certain point. Something stops the logical progression somewhere" (p. 332). Putting the brakes on prejudice requires exerting some type of control. In recent years, two specific lines of research have directly addressed what it means to "put the brakes" on prejudice (Devine & Monteith, 1999). Although these approaches similarly aim to understand specific prejudice reduction mechanisms, the resulting models differ in their attention to the postconscious and preconscious processes involved in establishing control over automatic prejudiced responses.

Postconscious cues for control

Monteith and her colleagues (Monteith, 1993; Monteith, Ashburn-Nardo, Voils, & Czopp, 2002) argued that low-prejudice people learn to overcome their automatic prejudiced tendencies through self-regulatory outcomes that follow from an awareness of the failure to control stereotyping or prejudice. Specifically, this program of research has revealed that awareness of a prejudiced response elicits not only guilt but other outcomes that enable low-prejudice people to exert control over future, potentially prejudiced responses. These other outcomes include heightened self-focus, a momentary disruption of ongoing behavior coupled with *retrospective* reflection on why the failure occurred, and careful attention to the stimuli or cues present when the failure occurred. Learning to associate a prejudice-related failure with guilt and self-regulatory mechanisms establishes *cues for control* (Monteith et al., 2002). When these cues are present in future situations, they lead to an immediate interruption in ongoing behavior and *prospective* reflection, which leads to response slowing and a careful consideration of how to respond with the goal of preventing a prejudiced response. This work is important because it provides a theoretical account of how controlled processes may be recruited to disrupt automatic processes in the presence of cues for control such that prejudiced responses are prevented and replaced with egalitarian responses. Across a number of experiments, Monteith and colleagues have provided compelling evidence that low-prejudice people can effectively learn to "put the brakes on their prejudices" (see also Kawakami et al., 2000).

Preconscious conflict detection

To the extent that cues for control become well learned, low-prejudice people should become highly efficient at eliminating prejudice and should, in effect, break the prejudice habit. However, evidence suggests that there is considerable variability in the effectiveness with which low-prejudice people regulate behavioral expressions of prejudice (e.g., Devine & Monteith, 1999; see also Dovidio, Kawakami & Gartner, 2002). Whereas some low-prejudice people are good at regulating prejudice (i.e., effective at inhibiting prejudice), others are less effective (see, for example, Amodio, Harmon-Jones, & Devine, 2003; Devine et al., 2002). Drawing on insights from the cognitive neuroscience literature, Amodio, Devine, and Harmon-Jones (2004; Amodio, Harmon-Jones, et al., 2004) explored the possibility that examining differences in underlying brain activity can help to clarify the types of processes used to exert control and reveal differences among effective and less effective prejudice regulators in the use of such processes.

Cognitive neuroscience evidence suggests that the process of control involves two mechanisms, each associated with activity in separate neural structures (e.g., Botvinick et al., 1999). The first is a conflict detection system, which monitors ongoing responses and is sensitive to competition between automatic and consciously intended responses. The conflict detection system, which has been associated with activity in the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), is constantly active, requires few resources, and may operate below the level of awareness. When the ACC detects conflict, it alerts a second, resource-dependent system designed to inhibit unintended responses and replace them with intended responses. This regulatory system has been shown to involve prefrontal cortical activity. Amodio et al. (2004) found that good regulators were more effective at responding without race bias than poor regulators, and that this difference was mediated by the sensitivity of the conflict detection system's response to race-biased tendencies (i.e., responses indicative of differences in ACC activity). That is, good regulators were more sensitive to the fact that their automatically activated stereotypes were at odds with their intended non-stereotypic responses and they were more efficient in recruiting controlled processes online as the response unfolded. Because the ACC operates automatically, these findings suggest that mechanisms of control are set in motion very early in the response stream and do not necessarily require conscious appraisals for the engagement of control. In this case, "putting the brakes on prejudice" involves preconscious mechanisms which both detect the potential for failure and recruit the needed controlled processes to avert biased responses and replace them with intended responses.

To the extent that these pre- and postconscious strategies are effective, over time they may enable people personally motivated to overcome prejudice to fully break the prejudice habit and achieve the type of *true resolution* (integration) of inner conflict envisioned by Allport. As anticipated by Allport, this process is likely to be a long one and certainly requires a major commitment among those for whom responding with prejudice is abhorrent.

Has Allport Been Supported?

In responding to this question, it is worth noting that Allport offered his analysis of inner conflict and speculations concerning strategies for resolving it largely without the benefit of empirical data. This fact makes

reexamination of his analysis and speculations an interesting exercise. To facilitate this exercise, note that Allport's chapter addressed the following four general themes, each of which has since been addressed in the contemporary literature: (a) the source of inner conflict, (b) the nature of inner conflict, (c) strategies for conflict reduction, and (d) issues concerning prejudice control. With regard to each of these themes, it is fair to say that Allport was right in large measure. Indeed, one could argue that his ideas and suppositions were nothing short of prescient. In reading Allport's "Inner Conflict" chapter, one can't help but be impressed with Allport's presaging of many of the major themes explored by subsequent generations of scholars.

Allport's insights about both the origins and the nature of inner conflict were right on target. He identified the necessary ingredients for the experience of prejudice with compunction. People who sincerely embrace egalitarian values prescribed by the American Creed hold themselves personally accountable for prejudice within themselves. As described above, Devine and colleagues' work provided direct empirical support for Allport's speculations. Allport also anticipated that the discomforting nature of inner conflict would lead some people to develop strategies to circumvent rather than to fully acknowledge the violation of values. Yet for others, he anticipated that working around the conflict would be an inadequate way to address inner conflict. These individuals, he argued, would need to "put the brakes on their prejudices" and work toward true resolution of the conflict.

It should be noted that the impetus to the study of these issues did not always follow directly from Allport's writings. That is, although Allport's analysis appears to have anticipated many of these themes, without the normative changes that followed in the wake of the 1954 Supreme Court Ruling on school desegregation and Civil Rights legislation of the early 1960s, these themes may not have emerged as central to the study of prejudice and its control. In other words, the issues that directly led to many of the more recent developments grew out of questions concerning the extent to which changes in personal attitudes kept pace with legal and normative changes. Allport could not have fully anticipated these changes and, indeed, this may be what makes his foreshadowing of contemporary themes all the more extraordinary.

Nonetheless, the contemporary literature has a number of strengths not evident in Allport's chapter. For example, the contemporary literature has provided much more detailed theoretical analyses of the disparity between one's reason and one's prejudice and the modern conceptualizations of this conflict have been subjected to empirical tests. Indeed, some of the most

exciting developments have come from fleshing out the process issues involved in "breaking the prejudice habit." Because Allport did not speak to automaticity, he did not anticipate these advances.

Future Directions

Though the contemporary literature has borne out many of Allport's insights, the most exciting developments are yet to come. For example, the research programs described above have drawn attention to postconscious and preconscious processes involved in controlling automatic processes that give rise to prejudiced responses even among those who consciously renounce prejudice. Future work will be needed to integrate postconscious control mechanisms (in which people effectively learn from their mistakes to avoid future discrepant responses) and the rapid onset of preconscious mechanisms that function to prevent a prejudice response as it unfolds. Is it the case, for example, that good regulators have established strong cues for control through the postconscious processes outlined by Monteith and colleagues and that, over time, these cues engage the conflict detection processes explored by Amodio and colleagues? A complete model of control will likely require integrating these programs of research, and doing so may ultimately provide insights concerning how to help poor regulators, who have similar nonprejudiced values, to develop sensitive conflict detection and control mechanisms to prevent prejudiced responses.

Another matter ripe for future research concerns an issue Allport largely overlooked. That is, although the bulk of Allport's chapter focused on the personal or internal reasons for renouncing prejudice and deploying mechanisms to address the attendant inner conflict, in a number of instances, Allport also alluded to the effect others' views may have in discouraging expressions of prejudice. Though Allport clearly recognized the power of both *inner* (personal) and *outer* (normative) forces discouraging the expression of prejudice as alternative types of cues for "putting the brakes on prejudice," he did not consider outer forces in any depth. Time, however, has revealed that the presence of others who discourage prejudice may be among the strongest cues for engaging controlled processes to prevent expressions of prejudice (see Crandall & Stangor, ch. 18 this volume).

Recent work has shown the importance of distinguishing between intra- and interpersonal processes when examining prejudice regulation. Plant and Devine (1998), for example, showed that people vary in the extent to which they are motivated to respond without prejudice for internal

compared with external reasons. Further, internal motives to respond without prejudice are strongly and negatively correlated with self-report measures of prejudice, whereas external motives are much less correlated with self-reported prejudice (and neither measure correlates strongly with general measures of self-presentation or social evaluation). Interestingly, the internal and external motive measures are largely independent; that is, people can be motivated to respond without prejudice for primarily internal reasons, primarily external reasons, both reasons, or simply be unmotivated.

Plant, Devine, and their colleagues' evolving program of research examines the utility of this individual difference approach for understanding the challenges involved in controlling prejudice (Devine et al., 2002; Devine, Brodish, & Vance, 2005; Plant & Devine, 1998, 2001, 2004). For example, low-prejudice people who are internally motivated experience compunction when they respond with prejudice, whereas people who are externally motivated experience threat – a qualitatively distinct form of affective distress. This distinction suggests the possibility that threat might serve as an effective cue for control for externally motivated people, whereas guilt might serve this function primarily for internally motivated people. Plant and Devine's (1998) work, then, may lead to new insights concerning the cues and the processes involved in controlling prejudice among those who lack the personal motivation to overcome prejudice.

Plant and Devine's (1998) measures have also proved useful in identifying who is most likely to respond with prejudice and, hence, needs to engage controlled processes to overcome its pernicious, if often unintended, effects. In Amodio et al.'s (2004) research on preconscious control processes, Plant and Devine's measures were used to identify who among the low-prejudice were good regulators of prejudice. Specifically, people high in internal but low on external motivation to respond without prejudice are generally effective in responding without prejudice, whereas people high on both motives are much more prone to responding with prejudice (Devine et al., 2002). Key questions remain, however, concerning how or why the presence of external motivation interferes with effective control of prejudice (or why its absence leads to effective control). Related questions concern the developmental antecedents of possessing internal and external motivation to respond without prejudice. Allport assumed that most people embraced the tenets of the American Creed and, hence, were vulnerable to inner conflict. Yet, the contemporary work suggests that there is some variability in the extent to which people internalize these ideals, and little is currently known about the characteristics of those who strongly internalize nonprejudiced standards and those who do so less strongly.

Finally, Allport took for granted that social norms would be influential in cuing the need to "put the brakes on prejudice." And, while these cues can be effective, they are not completely without costs. For example, Plant and Devine (2001) showed that people who are not privately motivated to respond without prejudice but who are sensitive to external mandates proscribing prejudice (i.e., low internal/high external), comply with pressure from others to respond without prejudice but do not do so happily. That is, their compliance is accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment, and sadly, this anger fuels their prejudice and their tendency to show a backlash against the pressure. As the study of prejudice and efforts to reduce it move forward, it is important to recognize that this type of external pressure can produce some counterintentional and counterproductive consequences. Such knowledge may prove useful in addressing perhaps the most enduring and difficult challenge faced by social scientists in the study of prejudice – namely, how to create internal motivation to be nonprejudiced. Without internal motivation, many of the processes explored in the "Inner Conflict" chapter are moot. It seems clear that merely applying pressure from outside encourages resistance to change. Future efforts to combat prejudice will need to strike a delicate balance between outer and inner forces for "putting the brakes on prejudice."

In conclusion, there are several noteworthy features of Allport's "Inner Conflict" chapter. First, in this chapter Allport confronted directly the paradox of racism in a nation founded on the fundamental principle of equality. He explored how ordinary people grapple with the paradox when they discover it within themselves (Myrdal, 1944). After all, to the extent that "all men [sic] are created equal," considering some (e.g., Black Americans) less equal (i.e., three-fifths of a man) shouldn't add up and *should* provide a challenge to one's sense of self as reasoned, fair, and just. Second, Allport's analysis is impressive in that, although he focused primarily on the experience of inner conflict and the compunction that it engenders, he also recognized the importance of social, cultural, religious, and political forces that questioned the morality (and ultimately, legality) of prejudice, which helped to set the stage for experiencing prejudice with compunction. In so doing, Allport recognized that prejudice is at once a personal and social phenomenon and that the two are inextricably intertwined. Finally, the "Inner Conflict" chapter provides a kind of optimism not fully evident in other chapters – an optimism about the potential to reduce prejudice among those who struggle with the moral uneasiness created by conflict between their values and their prejudice. One comes away with the impression the intrapersonal battle to conquer prejudice, though arduous, can be won.

Name _____   Date _____

Activity 8.10
RESPONDING TO STEREOTYPES

We have probably all been faced with situations where someone we are speaking with says something based on stereotypes. How should we respond? This exercise will demonstrate, and allow you to practice, a number of strategies for responding to stereotypes.

Directions: Review the strategies described below, then read the scenario that follows and write in your responses to the stereotypes expressed.

1. *Point out alternative explanations for behavior.* Studies show that we tend to make attributions (explanations for behavior) that support our stereotypes.

   Stereotype: Those Malaysian students think they are better than everyone else; they only associate with each other.

   Response: If I were in another country I might feel more comfortable staying with others from my group.

2. *Explain that individuals who are more visible may be atypical.*

   Stereotype: There's Mike, the head of the Gay Student Association. Those people sure look outrageous.

   Response: Mike's appearance may be rather unusual, but most gay and lesbian students look no different from anyone else.

3. *Be a cultural interpreter.*

   Stereotype: What is it with those people? I try to be nice to them, but they just won't look me in the eye.

   Response: I think Ramon and Celia are trying to be nice as well. In Filipino culture, many people think it is rude to have direct eye contact.

4. *Point out within-group differences.*

   Stereotype: That's the new Arabic teacher. I guess he's from Iran or Iraq.

   Response: There are at least 22 countries that are considered part of the Arab world. Not only that, but people in many other parts of the world speak Arabic languages as well.

5. *Point out similarities across groups.*

   Stereotype: Those people play their music so loudly.

   Response: Sometimes people get carried away when there's a party. Did you hear the noise coming from our fraternity last night?

6. *Indicate when conclusions are based on limited experience.*

   Stereotype: I'm tired of older people. They are always so frail and needy.

   Response: Maybe that's because you only have contact with older people in your job at the hospital. Most older people are much more active and independent.

7. *Point out information that does not support the stereotype.* Studies indicate that we tend to pay attention to and remember information that fits our stereotypes.

   Stereotype: Americans are so rich. Tony said he traveled all through Europe before he came to school here.

   Response: Yes, but he told us he worked for two summers to save money for that trip.

Scenario: Two first-year students are waiting for the third student with whom they will share rooms. They have just learned that the other student is African American. They are not African American.

Stereotype: Did you hear that our new suite-mate is Black? Wow, it must be something to grow up in the ghetto.

Response:(*Hint*: Be a cultural interpreter.)_____

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Stereotype: I bet he's an athlete.

Response:(*Hint*: Indicate when conclusions are based on limited experience). _____

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Stereotype: There was one Black guy in my high school who was an amazing athlete!

Response: (*Hint*: Explain that individuals who are more visible may be atypical and/or

point out within-group differences.) _____

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Stereotype: He didn't show up for the orientation session. I guess he's not very serious about college.

Response:(*Hint*: Point out alternative explanations for behavior and/or point out

information that does not support the stereotype.) _____

_____

Stereotype: I just hope the three of us can get along. It could be rough.

Response:(*Hint*: Point out similarities across groups.):_____

_____