

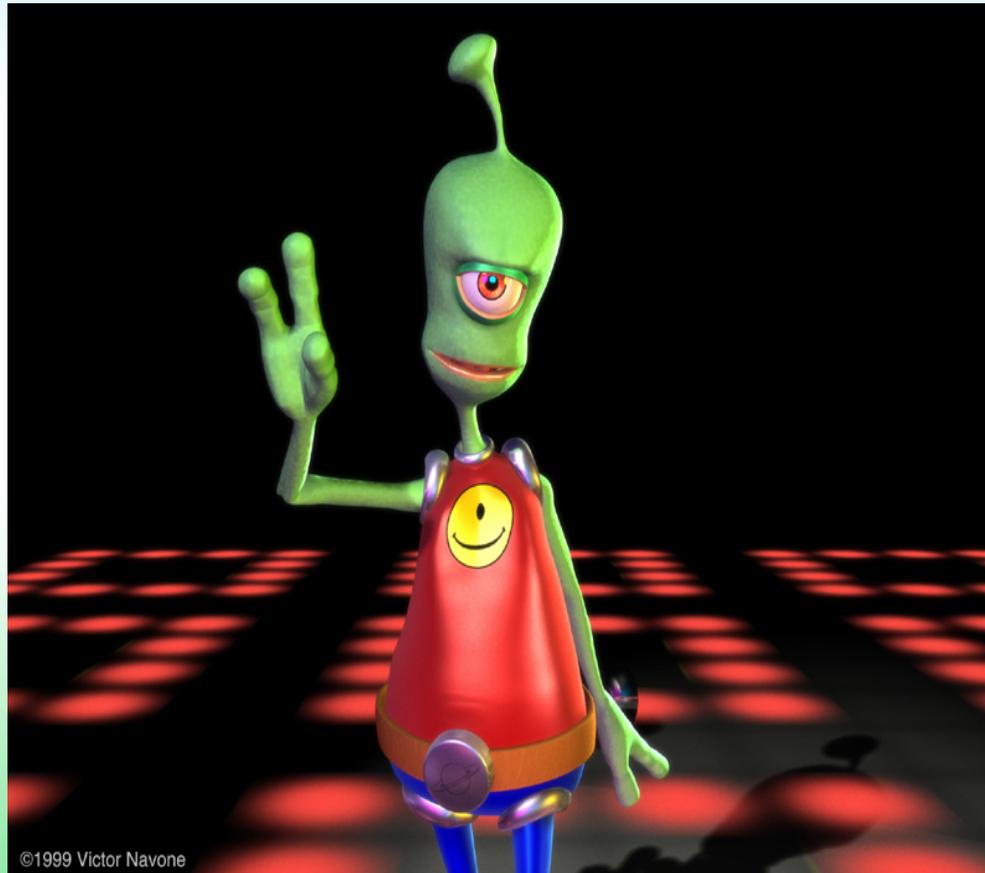
COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

or... when our thoughts and emotions clash



Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957)

First developed to explain how members of a cult were persuaded that earth will be destroyed and they will be the sole survivors rescued by aliens actually *increased* their commitment to the cult when this did not happen.



What is cognitive dissonance?

Unpleasant psychological tension that drives us to seek consistency among cognitions

When there's inconsistency- something must change to eliminate dissonance

Most likely for attitude to change to accommodate the behavior

Span

Justifies unpleasant events

Effort justification

Basically, when we feel cheap, stupid or guilty



Let's experiment...

One hour spent on boring task, then asked for a favour- act as experimenter and explain study to next subject. Paid either \$1 or \$20, later rate how enjoyable.

\$1 subjects rated higher.



How we reduce it



Changing cognition- change one to make consistent with the other

Adding cognition- adding consonant (in sync) cognitions

Altering importance- making one cognition more important than the other

At the top of the pyramid...

Love's assassin

Law & disorder

Wars & conflicts



A considerable
controversy...



Self perception theory (Bem, 1972)

No "negative drive state" = dissonance which we seek to relieve.

Instead, people simply *infer* their attitudes from their own behavior in the same way that an outside observer might.

In conclusion...

NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO COGNITIVE DISSONANCE!!



READ IT!!

