Chapter 8
In Search of Redemption
Phase 8 - A Phase of Dedication

So, finally, we come to respond to the intrusion that occurred in the Process of Motivation through the Impact from Reality...

As we observed in Chapter 5, in the Process of Motivation the reaction doesn’t occur immediately after this confrontation. It manifests itself progressively through successive Phases: first, by comparing our previous intentions as defined in the first Phases of the Process with this new input emerging from Reality, then followed by an appraisal of a suitable course of action. And it is only then, that we come to respond to the Impact in the Process. It is not ‘simply emerging’; the reaction follows from these previous Phases that determine its appearance and its intensity.

So it is the perspective, as it were, created by the objective that has been set that determines our reaction and the emotional expression it entails.

And the expression comes in pairs.

First appears the emotion experienced through the Impact from Reality towards the Process of Motivation. “Do I feel supported, acknowledged, recognized, or discouraged and obstructed in the attempt I was making at reaching my objective?” And the more Significant the objective, the more intense these primary emotions.

Let us, again, observe the examples we used.

So, here I am at Monserrate. And these folks are ruining my day. I feel not at all “supported, acknowledged, recognized”. Note how
simple and straightforward my reaction is. And recall how this was initiated by the indiscriminate perception from the previous Phase. These folks are all to blame, they are all disturbing my precious attempts, which evokes this primary reaction of non-support. There is no rationality involved. The emotions stream out. The idea that these people have every right to be there never enters the picture, and the idea that their presence, in fact, should be acclaimed for having such great taste to come and visit the Palace does not cross my mind: these rational thoughts may come, but they come later. And by then, they appear largely affected by these primary emotions emerging from the experience.

For now, then, the expression is simple and straightforward. And the more Significant my objective, the more explicit these feelings are likely to be. The intensity and tenacity, in both negative or positive expressions, can often serve as an indicator for an external observer of the severity of the Impact and the Significance of the objective that has been interfered with. Recall how we can often be caught by surprise with the intensity of someone’s reaction on a seemingly trivial event. It should make us aware, not only of the (often unintended) Impact of our actions, or those of others, but also of the (often unintended) interference they cause in highly Significant Goals that are more often than not carefully kept away from being disclosed to others. The same applies to me. Through my unpleasantness, and especially the intensity of my reaction, I reveal how much I am affected and disappointed in my visit to Monserrate, and more prominently, how Significant the event is for me, and how carefully I have concealed its true meaning in the expression of my temper.

And these ‘derivatives’, serving to protect the integrity of a Significant Goal, can thus become indicators to provide insight to an external observer (and to ourselves) into in their hidden meaning.

Now, these emotions came in pairs.
And my primal reaction was one of being not at all supported, and denied, disrespected in my attempts at having a long-awaited ‘romantic-experience-of-amazement-and-wonder’ at Monserrate. Now comes this strange, almost revengeful ‘tit-for-tat’ secondary reaction: I feel disdain and contempt towards my fellow visitors, in return. The impression of being disrespected by Reality (which is by no means apparent in any of the reactions of those visitors) leads to disrespect from my side, in return. And these feelings have largely been initiated by the assessments made in both previous Phases that led to this final outcome.

A bad day, indeed...

So let us change our repertoire, with our second example... Remember how well I did at the tennis match? How uplifting this experience has been! It makes one feel revitalized: this is ‘the world of success’, this is ‘the world of tennis!’ Now, it almost seems that I’m exaggerating (and of course, I am), but there is more to it than simple exaggeration. What I also achieve by overstating the experience is that I ‘boost’ and enhance the positive effects on my morale, my confidence, my self-worth; it has an almost therapeutical effect. It seems a simple exaggeration, but it is a ‘mental medicine’ that helps intensify the positive effects on the Process of achieving the objective, the Goal that I had set. And, in fact, as we saw, it wasn’t about just ‘playing a nice game’: it gradually, through this cyclical Process in Phases 1, 2 and 3, evolved into a more Significant Goal, where elements of confidence and self-worth gradually came to play an implicit role; and these very elements are now the ones that are being accentuated in the emotional assessments that are made in this present Phase. The primary reaction following the Impact from Reality is generated by the input from previous Phases 6 and 7: I feel “supported, acknowledged, recognized” in my achievements in this match. And, in return, in a secondary reaction I recognize, appreciate and even identify with this ‘acknowledging world’, which is ‘the world of tennis’. Just as demeaning wordings about the visitors at Monserrate served to reduce a negative Impact
on the Process of Motivation, so does an overstatement of ‘the world of tennis’ now serve to enhance its positive Impact on what I try to accomplish in this Process of Motivation.

*It is as if these primary and secondary emotions occurring in this Phase are not simple ‘derivatives’ of the Process of Motivation. They also serve to protect the Process; to prevent us in our attempts from harmful interference. It is a ‘cordon sanitaire’ against ‘the world out there’; a mechanism that serves to protect the integrity of the Process of Motivation as it progresses towards reaching the Goal that has been set.*

Let us take a next step in the examples we have set, and observe these protective mechanisms as they materialize in primary and secondary reactions.

Here is the third example. The wicked groceries... I had thought the criteria were clear; the deal was set. And in a subsequent Phase of Anticipated Change, I realized I had to proceed to action. So what are the emotional repercussions now? The two prior Phases provide exposure for my negligence. I had intended to postpone (no sufficient return on investment), but now both prior Phases following Impact show me I will have to act. These prior Phases of evaluation following Impact from Reality brought me to choose for the decent option and decrease Discrepancy. But having made this choice, my perception was that ‘Reality won’. In this present Phase it leads to feelings of ‘being exposed’, as I should have provided a follow-up. These feelings are personal and could have been different for someone else. These reactions highly depend on the individual. Note also that no action is being taken at this point: a follow-up on these feelings and observations comes later. So, to recapitulate, my primary reaction to the interference from Reality in my carefully orchestrated postponement in this Process of Motivation is one of ‘being exposed’, leading to a ‘sense of guilt’ and embarrassment. To compensate, I would gladly see my beloved (who thus interrupted my plans) have equal feelings towards me (to feel at least a ‘little
guilty’ would be most helpful indeed). And to ascertain that she does, I express frustration in a secondary reaction, which is one of ‘annoyance’. And these secondary feelings, in turn, can lead to subsequent reactions from her that further add to the experience...

Again, these ‘reactive mechanisms’ serve to protect me, in this case from guilt. And note how the expression is likely to induce quite an opposite reaction from others, thus from Reality...

Finally, let us examine the complex constellation of interrelated Processes of Motivation in the last three examples, sharing a common Reality and producing a variety of reactions in the last Phases, as we observed in the previous Chapter.

Somehow these interrelated Processes will have to lead to a common expression of feelings towards this interfering Reality, that is to serve as an adequate protection in this last Phase of the Process.

Let us observe, first, the trip to Hong Kong, where we considered a return for the first time. What are the effects on perceptions of Reality? Recall that the interference had a positive outcome: it produced, in a Phase of Anticipated Change, this appealing alternative of going to Hong Kong. One would expect at least a positive reaction, but recall that Reality did not provide support. It merely enabled this course of events to occur, but was in no way responsible for the alternative that presented itself: there was no offer of any sort to make this trip. On the contrary, the occurrence of an interfering superior (in the next example) led to considering an alternative. Emphasizing this negative occurrence in this parallel Process of Motivation would serve the cause of going to Hong Kong in this present example. So the Process of Motivation is well-served by expressing negative feelings to this interfering Reality, which is (literally, strangely enough) supporting my intentions to go in this present example. Primary feelings, then, acknowledge the (perceived) rejection that is caused by the interfering Reality, which serves my intentions to go; and these primary feelings, in turn, evoke secondary feelings expressed in the form of a rejection in return, for
“such a flagrant interference in one’s academic activities”. The worse my portrayal of my poor manager, the better it serves my purpose, and the sooner I’ll be on my way to Hong Kong. Note again that this portrayal is not at all served by having at least checked the underlying assumptions that the interference by my superior has been deliberate and that it was explicitly aimed at frustrating my attempts to publish. The less refined my judgment, and the less subtle the nuances I make, the better my Process of Motivation is served; but, in return, the more prejudiced I become, the more forceful and resistant I become to any nuance, any hesitation, or doubt. My presentation of the state of affairs thus becomes rigid and lacking.

Reconsidering my trip, and all these subsequent deliberations, was instigated by the confrontation with Reality in my fifth example: my superior inquiring on the status of a publication. And I was on high alert, as I had postponed writing a paper because I feared that I would fail in the attempt. This unfortunate addressing of my dormant Goal led me to decide to maintain my original objective in an assessment of adequacy made in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment; and subsequently to a ‘call to arms’, in a Phase of Anticipated Change, thereby affirming my strategy to postpone (and thereby also cleverly concealing my fear of failure), and conveniently emphasizing the need to go to Hong Kong and “leave all troubles behind”. And both Phases now determine my mindset in an emotional reaction and appraisal of Reality in the present Phase. I feel belittled and exposed in my fear: no sense of support whatsoever from Reality, from my superior “in these trying times”. Again, I do not verify these allusions, as they serve the protective measures I took in both preceding Phases. And these primary feelings of non-support experienced from Reality now lead to this strange, almost revengeful, ‘tit-for-tat’ secondary reaction: I feel disrespect towards my superior in return. As observed earlier, the impression of being disrespected by Reality (which has not been verified, and in the example happens to be an incorrect assumption) now leads to disrespect from my side, in return.
But how convenient this representation of Reality now becomes!

These primary and secondary emotions are not merely an outcome of the Process of Motivation, they also serve, as observed, to protect us from an intruding Reality; to protect the integrity of the Process of reaching the objective that was set. In having these primary and secondary reactions, I neutralize the perceived interference from Reality in the Process of Motivation that, in this example, was aimed initially at postponement of writing a paper. Reducing through feelings of disrespect an interfering Reality now prevents me from being pressurized. Turning Reality through these feelings of disrespect into an unobtrusive, inconspicuous version, a new representation of Reality, subsequently reduces the extent of a perceived interference. This new representation of my superior thus conveniently reduces the perceived threat to reconsider my postponement of writing the paper.

And all these mechanisms are intertwined. If I can have one Process of Motivation assist me to enhance these neutralizing effects in another Process, I will not hesitate to do so, as illustrated in the example of going to Hong Kong: the prospect of going there now gives me an entirely new perspective, and could, in addition, serve as a further deterrent for the exposure I experience to a forceful superior pressurizing me to publish, and to defy my fear of failure in writing this article: “I’m out of here, and Hong Kong may serve the cause!”

Lastly, then, let us observe how this ‘intertwined constellation of Processes of Motivation’ is further served in protecting our sixth and final example, which involved latent Goals: those Goals that were addressing the way ‘the world ought to be’. Recall that my latent objective was “to be part of a university with highest principles and moral values”, and “where autonomy was to prevail in every respect”. From the multitude of latent Goals that I have, this one was made to trigger. The email from my superior occurring as a perceived Reality in an adjacent Process of Motivation has now influenced the
setting in which I perceive and evaluate my university. As previously observed, it first led to questioning the values contained in my latent Goal in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment: “Did I do well to adhere to these highest moral standards, or should I drastically reduce these expectations, in considering my present position?” Now this, of course, was highly unlikely, given the Significance of my latent Goal, and the pervasive and urgent need to adhere to those highest standards, as we saw next in observing a Phase of Anticipated Change.

So, the perspective I had has now been supplemented by a frame of reference shaped in these two previous Phases. And this frame of reference leaves me no alternative but to be highly critical of my academic surroundings imposing a moral obligation to submit a paper (at least in my perception). My primary reaction is one of disapproval, referring to this ominous email: “They do not act towards me according to my standards of integrity and freedom of mind”, and as a result my secondary reaction mirrors my rejection of this perceived Reality: “I do not wish to be part of this anymore”. And thereby, I conveniently adhere to the feelings of disrespect I developed towards this perceived Reality, in both preceding and related examples.

Previous Phases, then, have produced a frame of reference, which now leads to primary and secondary reactions towards Reality, creating a picture that has, literally, lost a sense of realism and is lacking a basic verification of the underlying assumptions it suggests.

These successive Phases thus provide the ingredients that can make us rigid and prejudiced, intolerant in our perceptions; and the more Significant the objective, the Goal to which we refer, the more inclined we are to follow its perspective as the principal reference in our perception of Reality. Conversely, this reaction towards Reality can also be aimed at enhancing and amplifying positive aspects of
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Reality that serve or sustain the Process of Motivation, as we saw in our second example in a ‘world of tennis’.

So, in summary, here is the sequence once again.

A Goal has been set, and attempts have been made to reach that Goal with subsequent assessments in the first three Phases of the Process of Motivation. Now, Reality interferes in this Process, and its Impact is not directly reacted upon. Instead, these initial Phases of the Process provide a perspective to react in two subsequent Phases, thereby creating bias in the perception of Reality.

Reality in its Impact, then, is not observed the ‘way it is’, but is perceived through the perspective of the Goal with which it interferes. And the more Significant the Goal, the more pronounced the perspective, and the more predisposed a twofold reaction towards Reality. This next Phase in the Process of Motivation is a Phase where we contemplate and react on the effects of Impact through Reality: it is a ‘Phase of Dedication’.

Now, after these primary and secondary reactions in a Phase of Dedication, are we finally to proceed towards making those amendments that we have anticipated on when assessing adequacy of the Goal and the settings that were made, after the Impact of Reality?

Not quite...

There is a last phenomenon occurring prior to us doubling back on our tracks and carefully re-attuning the Goal and its parameters, as we observed in the first Phases of the Process. This phenomenon is referred to as a ‘Mechanism of Representation’.

These primary and secondary reactions we develop towards an interfering Reality leave a trace, an impression. It is in a sense a ‘visualization’ of what we believe Reality stands for, either in its negative or in its positive Impact on the Process of Motivation. And it is this image, this ‘Representation’, that we will use to anticipate
on, once we return to a first Phase of Expectancies, in which the intended re-amendments are made.

So, in a Phase of Dedication we not only define our perceptions of and feelings towards Reality in response to its Impact, we also generate a ‘visualization’, or ‘Representation’, of Reality in Mechanisms of Representation. And it is in those Mechanisms associated with the Impact from Reality that profound effects are to appear in the Process of Motivation...

Let us observe these effects in the examples used so far.

‘Crowds of people’ interfering with the pleasures of my day, and I need a clever way out, following the awareness that I cannot get even with such an adversary, with primary feelings of being denied and being disrespected, and secondary feelings of disdain and contempt in return. In the Representation of Reality, my fellow visitors become an anonymous ‘crowd’, cleverly reduced to a gathering of folks with whom you cannot reason and (consequently) where the elegant solution is to act “as any sensible person would do”, and leave the place.

Now, the opposite occurs when Reality recognizes and ascertains my Significant Goals. Where downgrading Reality served to reduce a negative Impact on the Process in the previous example, overstating Reality in our second example now serves to enhance the positive effects. ‘The world of tennis’ is made into a Representation that articulates high standards, following primary and secondary reactions of experiencing and expressing recognition. And being successful within such a setting extends and amplifies my winnings. It comes as no surprise that expressions (more often implicit than explicitly made) of being part of such a world associated with success often serve to confirm and consolidate the positive Impact it provides to our personal Goals, and reveal together with a vast array of materialized tokens, such as cars, clothing, jewelry, a need for such expressions that symbolize and confirm our success.
But Representations can take other forms as well that reveal their hidden meaning in highly concealed and suppressed ways. Those groceries... As an outcome of Phase 6 and Phase 7, I am going to do something that I do not want to do. And I am to neutralize these ‘pressurizing-influences-against-my-will’ originating from Reality: following the primary reaction of ‘being exposed’, combined with a ‘sense of guilt’ and embarrassment as we observed, those feelings in turn lead to a secondary, compensating reaction where I feel ‘annoyed’. And I could extend on those feelings, where I express my frustration and annoyance by pretending to be ‘amused’ by the situation. I now have a Representation of Reality that perfectly suits my needs. Reality becomes ‘a trivial incident’ so as to ‘downgrade’ its influence. The embarrassment I experience is reflected in the intensity of my conduct. To state it explicitly: the more I feel embarrassed, the more ‘amused’ I pretend to be, and the more I compensate with an unreasonable demeanor against my better judgment. In short, the more I care, the less serious I become. And these expressions, in turn, are most likely to lead to subsequent reactions that further add to the confusion that is caused.

These mechanisms, then, are made to neutralize a Significant Reality and the Impact it causes, by creating a Representation. And these Representations, surprisingly, are thus often made to conceal how much (in fact) we care, as in the example: to gain approval from those that are essential to us. *Mechanisms of Representation often appear at the basis of seemingly incomprehensible actions or expressions aimed in particular at those that are Significant to us.*

Let us increase complexity further with the last three examples.

Reality interfering in a dormant Goal of going to Hong Kong served to propel this pleasurable prospect, as it conveniently combined with feelings towards my superior, aimed at concealing my fear of failure to write a paper, and thereby sustaining feelings of disapproval concerning my latent Goal of being part of a university with highest principles where autonomy was to prevail. This
perception of Reality, interfering as we saw in multiple Processes of Motivation, now materializes in a Representation of my superior, turning an inconvenient Reality through these feelings into an unobtrusive, inconspicuous version, thereby reducing its interference. And this Representation cleverly supports the course of action set out in both previous Phases to consider leaving for Hong Kong. In addition, it consolidates the outcomes to maintain postponing this paper from the perspective that “with such directives I take control of my own priorities”, thereby further decreasing this perceived input from Reality. Which, incidentally, remains to be Significant. The inconvenient Reality is simply replaced by a Representation that better suits my courses of action initiated in both previous Phases. And, finally, this same Representation serves to defuse the Impact that triggered my latent Goal and made me determined not to “admit defeat” and surrender to “lesser moral standards”, where, again, the Representation conveniently neutralizes the intrusion that occurred from Reality.

And these Representations often result in strange ‘amalgamations’ that serve these Processes of Motivation to preserve and protect Significant Goals that have been set, be it explicit, dormant or latent in their expression.

So, this is where the intricate Process of Motivation leads us to when the Goals that we set are perceived as Significant. The successive Phases following a Phase of Impact lead to assessments that eventually, through primary and secondary reactions, make us adapt and change a perceived Reality into a Representation that better suits our needs.

Mechanisms of Representation are aimed at neutralizing Reality, either by enhancing its positive effects or reducing its negative effects, and in these effects they profoundly influence the way we perceive Reality, especially when its Significance is high.
And it is only then that we, finally, make the amendments anticipated on when we encountered Reality in its Impact, and successively assessed its effects on the Process of Motivation.

A Phase of Dedication marks the end of the sequential Process of Motivation, as it returns to make these amendments in a previous Phase in which these intentions initially materialized: a Phase of Expectancies. And by returning to these original Stages, the Process of Motivation has now become cyclical, where the sequence of successive Phases is re-initiated.

As we will observe in the next Chapter, there is a distinctive feature that makes this second cycle different from its previous version: we now come prepared for the upcoming renewed confrontation with Reality. And a most essential ingredient in this second cycle is provided through a Mechanism of Representation. For the Representation that was made as an outcome of the first cycle is now introduced in lieu of its original.

So, in this new cycle of the Process of Motivation, Reality has changed, and the more Significant the objective, the more it is changed to a Representation, creating circumstances for discord and conflict to emerge... A perfectly innocent group of visitors thus turns into a ‘crowd’ ruining the day; a tennis match turns into a glamorous event; a ‘moral-and-decent-thing-to-do’ is being challenged and turned into an unpleasant obligation; and an interfering superior is made into an unobtrusive, inconspicuous character.

Although in portraying those negative pictures, it appears that Mechanisms of Representation often produce the most disturbing effects, it is to be noted that these Mechanisms can also produce a positive and staggering portrayal of a Significant Reality that has
enhanced and supported our attempts at reaching a desirable Goal: these Representations then take the form of the ‘perfect’ teacher, coach, lecturer, the ‘best ever’ performer, film, actor or actress, author, composer, and these are but a few examples of how a Mechanism of Representation can outperform its uplifting effects on the Process of Motivation.

But although these represent a positive side of the picture, negative implications nonetheless appear to prevail. And the uneasy, apprehensive conclusion is to be maintained that many of our problems, arguments and conflicts originate from this Mechanism of Representation. This is where prejudice, irrationality, exaggeration originate from. This is how unverified assumptions, misinterpretations based on the disruptive Impact from Reality on dormant and latent Goals bring dreams to a halt and can affect one’s future beyond repair...

The eighth Phase in the Process of Motivation is a Phase of Dedication.

Following the Impact from Reality and the perception of Discrepancy, three evaluative reactions occur.

And the third, and final, of these reactions is aimed at an assessment of Reality. In a primary reaction (“How do I experience the Impact from Reality?”) and in a secondary reaction (“What is my response in return?”) the assessment is made.

After this Phase, the Process proceeds towards making the necessary amendments anticipated on, by returning to the first Phase, a Phase of Expectancies, thereby turning the Process of Motivation into a cyclical system of recurring Phases progressing sequentially towards Goal attainment.
In a sequence of Phases following the Impact from Reality, a re-orientation occurs of the Goal versus Reality. This re-orientation aims at the essential elements that are involved: the Goal and its parameters, the gap or Discrepancy, and Reality.

In reference to Fig 5.3., Chapter 5, the third and final assessment we make, then, is aimed at Reality...

One would assume that following the Impact from Reality, we react directly to the new situation at hand; and it often seems that we do. But the reaction, even if it appears to occur almost instantaneously, is always preceded by this stepwise assessment Process we first came to observe in Chapter 5. As without these steps, there would be no reaction: we first have to have awareness of the occurrence (in Phase 4) and the effects it has on our attempts at reaching an objective (Phase 5); then we need to assess adequacy (Phase 6) and consequences (Phase 7), before we can make the actual amendments needed to address the situation.

So, a Phase of Impact was found to set in motion three reactions, previously described as ‘preceding passive, evaluative reactions’, before we are set to re-attune the Goal and its parameters. The third of these three reactions constitutes the eighth and last Phase in the Process of Motivation.

In this Phase, a Phase of Dedication, after having observed the Goal and the gap that emerged, the attention now turns back to Reality. Thus, it is assumed in the Model of Motivation that the individual, after having assessed the Impact from Reality on the Goal that has been set, now in turn evaluates Reality. In this respect, a Phase of Dedication differs drastically in nature from the previous Phases in the Process of Motivation. All preceding Phases were centered around the Goal. A Phase of Dedication, in contrast, focuses on Reality1.

1 From this perspective, one could argue that a Phase of Dedication should be excluded from the Model. It does not belong in a Process of Motivation, for the Process evolves around a Goal, as defined initially in the Introduction. A Phase of Dedication appears to be rather a product, or an outcome, of the Process. But there is an important reason to include the Phase within the Model of Motivation, for it will prove to provide essential input for a subsequent active reaction towards Reality, when a re-formulation of the Goal and its associated parameters is made in a subsequent renewed cycle of the Process. As we shall observe, the perception the individual holds of Reality is to determine to a large extent these renewed amendments that are essential in re-establishing an adequate balance within the Process. A Phase of Dedication is therefore included as an integral part, and a distinct Phase, within the Model.
This third evaluative reaction has two distinct features: it evaluates Reality, but this evaluation also produces a specific outcome, referred to as a ‘Representation’.

First, the evaluation.

In a Phase of Dedication, then, it is not the Goal but Reality that is at focus. Given the input provided by the previous two Phases, in a Phase of Dedication an assessment is made in terms of perceived ‘support’, or ‘non-support’, for the Goal, which is central to the Process, and for the various parameters initially set.

It is assumed that a Phase of Dedication progresses in four Stages, as opposed to the previous evaluations that occurred in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment and a Phase of Anticipated Change. In this third evaluative Phase, one Stage is excluded: a Stage evaluating Reality versus the Goal. The Stage is excluded as it has been evaluated earlier in a Stage of Impact. In this Stage, or Phase, an assessment was made of implications for the Process of reaching the Goal, given the introduction of Reality. The Impact of Reality was defined as a ‘Discrepancy’ experienced by the individual between a perceived Reality and the Goal that had been set, which expresses an assessment in terms of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ towards this Goal.

So, an analysis of the effects of Reality specifically addressed towards the Goal that has been set, is to be excluded from this Phase of Dedication, as the assessment has previously occurred in a Stage, or Phase, of Impact, thereby expressing the prominent position of this Stage within the Process of Motivation.

The passive, evaluative reaction in a Phase of Dedication, then, is aimed at the four remaining Stages that were instrumental in defining the Goal. The first of which consisted of a Stage of Attitude. Earlier, Attitude was defined as a ‘mental status’ aimed towards the Goal and thus, starting the Process of Motivation. This mental status has now been re-evaluated after Reality interrupted the Process of Motivation. How then is Reality, in turn, being evaluated after the event? In the first Stage of a Phase of Dedication, a **Stage of Appreciation** is defined as a passive, evaluative reaction towards Reality, from a perspective of the Attitude initially set. Basically, Reality can be perceived as ‘supportive’, ‘non-supportive’ or ‘neutral’ to the initial Attitude, and this perception is largely influenced by both re-assessments in previous Phases of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment and Anticipated Change. Likewise, a **Stage of Approbation** can be defined as a passive, evaluative reaction towards Reality from a perspective of the ‘Energy’ or investment needed to reach the Goal, thus reflecting its perceived value. In addition, a **Stage of Affirmation** is a passive, evaluative reaction towards Reality from a perspective of Achievement and Failure, and a **Stage of Commitment** from a perspective of Satisfaction and Frustration.
Fig. 8.1.
A visualized overview of Phase 8, a Phase of Dedication in the theoretical Model of Motivation, consisting of:

21. A Stage of Appreciation
22. A Stage of Approbation
23. A Stage of Affirmation
24. A Stage of Commitment
These assessments are visualized in Fig. 8.1., for the four consecutive Stages comprising a Phase of Dedication. These four Stages, which reflect the Stages from a Phase of Expectancies, are assumed to remain the same, as the Process is anticipatory and reflective in nature. Only the assessments for each element are observed, thus, ‘contrasting’ the four parameters with Reality as observed. In addition, from Fig. 8.1., this ‘contrasting’ between the Goal and Reality can also be observed, as previously visualized in Chapter 5, Fig. 5.1., illustrating the observations made on the evaluation of the Goal in a Phase of Impact. The evaluation previously made in this Phase of Impact complements, as it were, those that were made in a Phase of Dedication.

But in this Phase of Dedication much more is happening than a mere assessment of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality at various levels. This assessment of Reality within each of the four Stages proceeds in two steps, in what we referred to earlier as a ‘primary’ and a ‘secondary’ evaluation.

In a Stage of Appreciation, the primary evaluation is mainly aimed at perceptions of ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality for the Attitude initially defined within a Phase of Expectancies. If Reality is perceived as ‘supportive’ to one’s Attitude, this will lead to feelings of ‘being appreciated’ or ‘acknowledged’, in a primary evaluation. And, as a spin-off, this in turn will lead to feelings of ‘appreciation’ towards Reality in reaction, as a secondary evaluation. In parallel, if Reality is perceived as ‘non-supportive’, this could lead to feelings of ‘being denied’, or ‘ignored’, or ‘rejected’, in a primary evaluation. And these feelings, in turn, could lead to feelings of ‘contempt’ towards Reality, in a secondary evaluation. The more Reality is perceived as Significant, the more these feelings of ‘being appreciated’ or ‘being ignored’ emerge, and consequently, the more these will lead to feelings of either ‘appreciation’ or ‘contempt’ towards Reality in return.

In line with this, the Stage of Approbation is an evaluative reaction of Reality from a perspective of Energy, or investment needed to reach the Goal. From this perspective, one assesses perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ for the investment one has made, which also reflects a perceived value one attaches to the Goal. A perception of Reality as ‘supportive’ or ‘non-supportive’ leads to feelings of ‘being valued’ or ‘not valued’, in a primary evaluation. And these feelings are intensified by the Significance attached to Reality. These primary evaluations, in turn, lead to secondary evaluations that are a reaction of these perceptions. When one feels ‘valued’ in case of perceived ‘support’, one is likely to ‘value’ Reality in return, thereby incidentally increasing its supportive properties. When one feels ‘not valued’, a reaction in the form of a secondary evaluation is likely to lead to similar feelings in return, thereby diminishing the effects Reality entails.

Likewise, in a Stage of Affirmation, an evaluation occurs of Reality from a
point of view of initial Achievement and Failure ratios. In a primary evaluation, Reality is perceived as either ‘confirming’ or ‘disapproving’ one’s choices. These perceptions of Reality being ‘supportive’ or ‘non-supportive’ for one’s judgment, in turn, are likely to lead to secondary evaluations where these feelings of ‘confirmation’ or ‘disapproval’ from Reality, in turn, are echoed by feelings ‘confirming’ or ‘disapproving’ Reality, and thus affirming or questioning its integrity.

And finally, a Stage of Commitment concludes these evaluations. The Stage of Commitment is the ‘end of the equation’ and the ‘grand total’ of all the effects experienced from Reality in a condensed format. A Stage of Commitment either ‘pushes one up or brings one down’. It provides the individual with the experience of ‘worth’, of being ‘esteemed’, depending on one’s perception of Reality. When Reality is perceived as ‘supportive’ of one’s subjective judgments, the primary evaluations will lead to feelings of ‘worth’, of ‘making a difference’, as instigated by Reality. The experience of ‘non-support’ from Reality often leads to extreme polarized reactions, with feelings of being ‘unworthy’. And where one feels Reality as being either ‘dedicated’ or ‘hostile’ to one’s cause, feelings of ‘commitment’ or ‘hostility’ are mirrored to Reality in return, in secondary evaluations.

So, these four Stages produce a variety of primary evaluations of perceived ‘support’, or ‘non-support’ in Reality. And these primary evaluations, in turn, generate a series of secondary evaluations towards Reality, in return.

This succession of evaluations, finally, results in a second remarkable feature occurring in a Phase of Dedication: the emergence of a ‘Mechanism of Representation’.

Where primary evaluations lead to secondary evaluations, these effects are not only an outcome of the Process of Motivation, they also, and predominantly, serve to maintain this Process of reaching an objective. The primary and secondary evaluations emerge at all four Stages. In the Model of Motivation, it is assumed that these expressions, or feelings towards Reality, provide the input to further maintain the integrity of the Process. By evaluating Reality, the individual obtains the ingredients to either enhance or neutralize the influence of Reality on the Process. In doing so, however, it is assumed a dangerous procedure is introduced in the Process of Motivation: the individual changes Reality in a direction that is most suitable to the Process. And the mechanisms that serve to produce these protective measures, as a resultant of evaluations in a Phase of Dedication, are referred to as ‘Mechanisms of Representation’. These Mechanisms are an outcome of the evaluative Stages that occur in a Phase of Dedication, where the individual substitutes, or superimposes, an image obtained from these Stages in lieu of Reality. This image is referred to as a ‘Representation’.
In a Stage of Appreciation, where Reality is experienced as ‘supportive’, feelings of ‘being appreciated’ or ‘acknowledged’ are greatly served by an image expressing these feelings to further strengthen and ‘propel’ the Process. Where one feels Reality to be ‘non-supportive’, reactive feelings of ‘contempt’ towards Reality are likewise reflected in its Representation, which assists in neutralizing its importance, thereby diminishing the Impact it originally had on the Process.

In a Stage of Approbation, comparable Mechanisms serve to produce an image that either propels or neutralizes the perceived influence of Reality on the Process of Motivation. If one feels ‘support’ for one’s investment, reflected in a perceived value of the Goal, a Representation expressing value towards Reality serves to enhance the positive Impact it produces. And if one feels ‘non-support’, an image expressing perceptions of a limited value attached to Reality will serve to diminish its importance, and hence its Significance, and neutralize its effects. A Significant Reality that acknowledges one’s value system is valued even more, so as to further increase its effects on the Process of Motivation, as the increased Significance serves to further propel its effects. But the reverse also holds true. If one attaches great Significance to Reality and Reality is ‘not supportive’ of one’s values, one ‘degrades’ Reality to neutralize or diminish its negative Impact. The more one perceives a Significant Reality as ‘non-supportive’, the more one tends to belittle its effects in the Representation generated as an outcome.

Likewise, in a Stage of Affirmation, the more one either confirms or questions the integrity of Reality, as an outcome of the evaluations, the more these perceptions are expressed in the Representation that is generated.

And finally, in a Stage of Commitment, the perception that one’s emotional ‘belief system’ is either ‘shared’ or ‘rejected’ by Reality leads to profound feelings towards Reality in return, that are reflected in the Representation these evaluations produce. And these, in turn, serve to further propel the perceived positive effects, or neutralize the perceived negative interference from Reality in the Process of Motivation.

So, a Phase of Dedication has two distinct features that produce a specific effect on the Process of Motivation: it evaluates Reality in a primary and a secondary sequence, and this, in turn, produces an image of Reality in a Mechanism of Representation.

Now, do these effects associated with Mechanisms of Representation always occur or are there exceptions to the rule we observed earlier, in the previous Chapters, that Significance of the Goal and perceived Significance of Reality appear to control these outcomes to a large extent?

When do these effects occur? Previously, it was found that the various
expressions in which the Process of Motivation could manifest itself, was largely
determined by three essential constructs, Significance of the Goal, Discrepancy
and perceived Significance of Reality. And combinations of these could be
summarized in eight main options, as covered in Chapter 5. So to observe if, and
when, effects occur in Mechanisms of Representation, we could, again, make use
of these various manifestations in which the Process of Motivation reveals itself.

Let us proceed in the order used earlier, with highly Significant Goals, facing
Reality with low perceived Significance (options 1 and 3, p. 123). If Discrepancy
is high, the outcomes of a primary evaluation are expected to be negative; but
Reality appears to have little importance and therefore produces a secondary
evaluation that might have a negative connotation, but is not expected to lead to a
pronounced Representation, as Reality lacks the status to leave a trace on the
Process of Motivation. Despite its negative Impact and high Discrepancy, the
Process needs no substantial amendments to further progress its course. If
Discrepancy is low, the same outcome is likely to occur, despite the positive effects
of low Discrepancy1. In parallel, effects are even further reduced when the Goal
lacks Significance in combination with such a low perceived Significance of
Reality (options 5 and 7, p. 124). The Process of Motivation proceeds through its
various Phases without dramatic effects occurring. These effects could change
slightly when perceived Significance of Reality increases. A first variation is when
a Goal with low Significance meets a highly Significant Reality that is highly
Discrepant (option 6, p. 124). This time, the Goal has little standing to justify
further dramatic action in Mechanisms of Representation. But in this case, it could
progress in two ways: either the primary evaluation (which is negative) could elicit
a negative response, leading to a neutralizing Representation, or the primary
evaluation could be perceived as an early warning (“think twice”) to have one’s
Goal amended in time before a renewed confrontation occurs. However, the input
provided in previous Phases, as observed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, makes this
option less probable, as the Goal lacks ‘weight’ to justify further action, making it
likely the situation remains unresponsive, with limited effects of Mechanisms of
Representation. When Discrepancy decreases, however (option 8, p. 124), the
effects are expected to be higher. A Significant Reality ‘taps into’ one’s Process
of Motivation, and although Significance of the Goal is low, perceived ‘support’
from Reality is welcomed, and the acknowledging effects obtained from a primary
evaluation can lead to secondary reactions which, in turn, can serve to further
propel these effects in a more pronounced Representation of Reality, especially as

1 Although it is tempting to seek such Impact for the positive effects it induces on the Process, thereby
raising the probability of a gradual increase in Significance of Reality. We will come to realize when
observing a Process of Interference later in the Series that this is an effective technique used not only
to address Motivation, but also to increase perceived Significance of an interfering Reality.
the Process of Motivation progresses through further subsequent cycles\(^1\). Nonetheless, the limited Significance of the Goal, prevents dramatic expressions in Mechanisms of Representation that could propel the Process of Motivation.

We hardly need to further elaborate on the last two options, and the effects they yield on the Process of Motivation. In line with the observations already made, when a Significant Goal is confronted with a Significant Reality and perceived Discrepancy is large (option 2, p. 123), the negative effects of a primary evaluation affect those of a secondary evaluation, which, in turn, lead to Mechanisms of Representation that are aimed at degrading and neutralizing the Impact from Reality. Likewise, the effects dramatically increase when Discrepancy is perceived to be small (option 4, p. 123), where the positive effects of Impact lead to a positive primary evaluation in reaction to perceived ‘support’, releasing positive reactions towards Reality in a secondary evaluation, which leads to Mechanisms of Representation that will underscore perceived Significance of Reality, thus propelling its positive Impact on the Process of Motivation.

So, effects associated with Mechanisms of Representation occur on a ‘progressive scale’, where Significance of the Goal and perceived Significance of Reality appear to regulate the extent of these effects, in parallel with what was observed before in both a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment and a Phase of Anticipated Change, preceding a Phase of Dedication.

In summary, then, a Phase of Dedication finalizes a threefold passive, evaluative reaction towards Reality. It is a ‘grand total’ of the Process of Motivation, where all previous Phases play a role in determining a subjective experience of Reality. Reality is perceived as ‘supportive’, ‘non-supportive’ or ‘neutral’ to the way parameters were defined in a Phase of Expectancies in the Process of Motivation. These thoughts and feelings, emerging from a perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’, in turn, give rise to thoughts and feelings oriented towards Reality. And, as a result of these four Stages, a set of primary evaluations emerges stemming from a perception of Reality, with a set of secondary evaluations directed towards Reality in return.

And these ‘intertwined’ primary and secondary evaluations serve to produce an image, or Representation, of Reality on a ‘progressive scale’ that aims at either neutralizing or reinforcing the effects of Reality on the Process of Motivation.

\(^1\) Again, it seems likely that one seeks such Impact. Thus, in addition to the previous note, a technique where one aims at decreasing Discrepancy is likely to lead to a further increase in perceived Significance of Reality and is likely to be effective in addressing Motivation, through a Process of Interference.
This third evaluative Phase of Dedication is depicted in Fig. 8.2., summarizing the sequence of subsequent Phases as it continues to follow the input provided from a previous Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment and a Phase of Anticipated Change, which are its ‘predecessors’ in the Process of Motivation.

And finally, then, the input provided by the successive evaluations in these three Phases following the Impact from Reality is used to make the subsequent amendments to the Goal and the parameters initially set in a Phase of Expectancies, thereby returning to the initial Stages of the Process, and thus turning the Process
of Motivation into a cyclical Process where the sequence of Phases is re-initiated.

Fig 8.3. illustrates this returning, final step, and therefore visualizes the Process of Motivation as it emerges in its final form: A progressive sequence of successive Phases that is predominantly characterized by its cyclical nature.

These subjective and often highly emotional evaluations in a Phase of Dedication not only affect the Process of Motivation, but have a broader influence on many aspects of our lives. The Impact from Reality can make me more daring and ambitious, and can make me adapt my Goals accordingly. It can make me more confident and seek new challenges. But it can also make me doubt my performance and apprehensive to initiate new ventures.

The Impact from Reality can affect my perception of who I am, or how I would like to be perceived by this intruding and unexpected Reality.

Impact from Reality leaves traces that affect one’s perception of adequacy and, extending on beliefs of one’s potential and competence as observed in Chapter 6, the perception one has of oneself. In theory and research, these effects have been studied extensively in constructs referred to as ‘self-concept’ and ‘academic self-concept’. These findings provide intriguing insights that seem to confirm the assumptions made in the Model of Motivation.
We have seen how Reality through its Impact affected us. We felt ‘acknowledged’, ‘valued’ and ‘confirmed’ or ‘ignored’, ‘rejected’ and ‘disapproved’. We succeeded or we failed; we accomplished our Goal, in full or in part, where Impact interfered and could play a substantial role. And these assessments in terms of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from the encounter we had with Reality, in turn, affected the way we experienced Impact from Reality, in what was referred to as ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ reactions, or evaluations.

Finally, then, we are to cover theories from literature that could provide evidence for these conceptualizations that are part of a Phase of Dedication. Following our analysis in the previous Section, we should have two lines to observe in theories that cover the effects of a subjective experience of Reality and its Impact. In parallel with primary evaluations, or thoughts and feelings, emerging from perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality, we can observe secondary evaluations, or those directed towards Reality in return.

Thus, and slightly re-defined to be more in line with conceptualizations in current literature, we need to observe:

- **Primary evaluations**; notably in theories on cognitive and affective reactions as a resultant of Impact, experienced from Reality;
- To be extended with findings from literature on how we come to perceive ourselves, as a consequence, covering effects on what has been referred to as the ‘self’, with constructs of ‘self-esteem’ and, notably, ‘self-concept’.
- **Secondary evaluations**; notably in theories on cognitive and affective reactions as a resultant of Impact, oriented towards Reality.

In observing primary evaluations, the ones we experience from Reality, two fields of study in literature have been prominent: attribution theory, previously covered in Chapter 7, and social cognitive theory, which was elaborated on in Chapter 6. Also, primary evaluations, by their nature, have been the subject of theories that center around perceptions of self and self-concept; and we will cover these fields of study subsequently at the end of the Section.

Now, secondary evaluations, the ones we tend to have towards Reality, have only occasionally been the subject of theories in the field of motivation. As confusion can arise with external interventions that we referred to as being part of a Process of Interference, we will refrain from covering these presently, and will return to elaborate on these findings when addressing Interference.
In observing the effects of Reality, we will extend our coverage also to the field of self-determination theory, in summarizing the effects of social and environmental causes on motivation, and its repercussions on the various ways it manifests itself.

So, we will emphasize theories from literature that have studied cognitive and affective reactions as a resultant of Impact and experienced from Reality, with either unexpected outcomes or outcomes that are perceived to be (partly) beyond our influence. As observed earlier, many studies related to motivation have been performed in the achievement domain. In observing theories on cognitive and affective reactions, only few have covered effects in the affective domain: “(...) Motivation surely is determined by affects. A fault with many current approaches to motivation, exemplified in self-efficacy theory, goal theory, intrinsic motivation theory, and many other conceptualizations, is they are devoid (or nearly devoid) of affects. (...) We desire to maximize good feelings and minimize bad ones, with actions guided by a cost-benefit analysis and hedonic desires” (Weiner, 2006, p. 34).

In short, then, we will consider three theories: in observing cognitive and affective reactions, we will cover attribution theories and social cognitive theory, and in observing effects of Reality, in general, we will cover self-determination theory.

In covering attribution theories, we will focus again on Weiner’s attributional theory of motivation and emotion, and proceed where we left off in Chapter 7. Recall that in Weiner’s theory causal ascriptions play a central role. In achievement-related contexts there are a few dominant causal perceptions, and these were identified as: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. These perceived causes of success and failure share three common properties, or causal dimensions: controllability, stability, and locus.

Now, in Weiner’s attributional theory of motivation and emotion, these three causal dimensions “(...) affect a variety of common emotional experiences, including anger, gratitude, guilt, hopelessness, pity, pride, and shame. Expectancy and affect, in turn, are presumed to guide motivated behavior. The theory therefore relates the structure of thinking to the dynamics of feeling and action” (Weiner, 1985, p. 548). The theory “(...) assumes a sequence in which cognitions of increasing complexity enter into the emotion process to further refine and differentiate experience. (...) Following outcome appraisal and the immediate

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1 Weiner expressed these comments in 2006, despite promising observations made in the early 1990s, where he mentioned “(...) a tremendous increase (...) in the study of emotion in psychology, including the function of emotion as a motivator (...)” (Weiner, 1992, p. 301).
affective reaction, a causal ascription will be sought. A different set of emotions is then generated by the chosen attribution(s)" (Weiner, 1985, p. 560).

Thus, according to Weiner, it is not so much the attributed cause, but rather the causal dimension associated or connected to the cause that largely determines the emotional impact it produces or generates.

To illustrate, let us use the example we used earlier in Chapter 7, and then observe the implications for the Model of Motivation, as well as the insight it provides into perceptions of the effects of Reality in a Phase of Dedication.

Recall how in Chapter 7 we discussed the example of failing a test. We had several options in attributing the cause of our failure: ability, effort, task difficulty, or luck.

As we saw, attributing the cause of failure to a lack of ability was to attribute the reason of one’s failure to a cause that has an uncontrollable, stable, and internal property or dimension. Taking such a stand or perspective towards an unexpected achievement-related event (defined as an intruding Reality in the Model of Motivation) leads not only to cognitive, but also to affective reactions. Attributing a cause of failure to a lack of ability, according to attribution theory, brings about feelings of shame, as the uncontrollable property leads one to assume that success is beyond one’s reach. In addition, and as a consequence of the stability dimension, these low expectations of future success are perceived to remain unchanged, which leads to feelings of hopelessness. And to make matters worse, assigning a failure to a lack of ability tends to affect one’s self-esteem, as causality is perceived to be internal, where one sees oneself as the primal source of one’s failure (Weiner, 1985; 1986, notably Chapter 5). And as mentioned in Chapter 7, these perceptions have consequences in terms of subsequent investment and motivation, as expressed in performance and persistence: “Expectations of future failure, paired with negative emotions and less self-responsibility, in turn, deplete motivation and erode performance, making persistence (...) much less likely” (Perry & Hamm, 2017, p. 63).

1 Thus, within the attributional theory of motivation and emotion, Weiner makes a clear distinction in emotions that directly follow the outcome of an achievement-related event, in terms of a positive or negative reaction based on perceived success or failure. Those emotions subsequently initiate causal search (as covered in Chapter 7) and are defined as ‘primary appraisals’ and labeled as ‘outcome dependent-attribution independent’, as distinct from emotions that are to follow the attributional process and that are the subject of our present analysis (see: Weiner, 1985).

2 Had the test been successful, these affective reactions associated with uncontrollable, stable, and internal properties would have been gratitude, hopefulness, and pride, respectively (where gratitude is usually perceived in affiliation with others (Weiner, 1985).
Things change, however, when one assigns a cause of failure to a lack of effort. Reactions as a consequence of attributing failure rather to a controllable, unstable, and internal cause lead to a range of differing emotional consequences, affecting, in turn, the outcomes in terms of subsequent investment and motivation. When the cause of failure is perceived to be controllable, attribution theory assumes one has failed in an attempt where one has had the opportunity to invest sufficient effort, but simply didn’t, leading to feelings of 
\textit{guilt} (being controllable, as opposed to shame, in the previous example); fortunately, however, these feelings are perceived to be unstable, where expectations about future performance lead to \textit{hopefulness} (as opposed to hopelessness, in the attribute of ability), as the investment is perceived to have the property to fluctuate over time. The cause of one’s failing is perceived to be internal, thus entirely in one’s hands, and affecting \textit{self-esteem}, which is expected to propel measures aimed at improvement: “Controllable causes (e.g. low effort) increase perceived responsibility for an outcome, as well as guilt, which together initiate actions to rectify the situation. Guilt is a motivating emotion and is less psychologically debilitating than shame or hopelessness” (Perry & Hamm, 2017, p. 63; see also: Weiner, 1985, 1986, notably Chapter 5)\textsuperscript{1}.

An observation referred to earlier in Chapter 7 can be made in summarizing these theoretical assumptions made in attribution theory: “Differences between ability and effort attributions in stability and controllability lie at the heart of many motivation and performance outcomes in achievement situations. Although both causes are internal, ascribing poor performance to low ability (stable, uncontrollable) decreases motivation, whereas low effort (unstable, controllable) increases motivation” (Perry & Hamm, 2017, p. 63), especially because the situation can be altered due to its perceived controllability.

As a (probable) consequence of these remarkable conclusions, literature has mainly focused on attributing causes to ability or effort, and its effects on performance, persistence, and self-esteem. However, for the purpose of observing theories on effects of Reality in terms of cognition and affect, we may attempt to extend these observations to include possible effects of the two remaining causes, task difficulty and luck, despite a modest coverage in literature.

When causes of failure are attributed to task difficulty, which is believed to be uncontrollable, stable, and external according to attribution theory (that is, from the perspective of an actor; see Weiner, 2018), the outcomes of the attributional process lead to affective reactions that may correspond to those just observed, with feelings of \textit{shame} associated with the uncontrollable property. The stability

\textsuperscript{1} As a consequence, success that follows upon a long-term period of effort expenditure results in a feeling of \textit{calmness} or \textit{serenity}, notably affecting \textit{hopefulness} (stability, in a positive connotation) and \textit{pride} (locus) (Weiner, 1985).
dimension could give rise to low expectations of future success leading to feelings of hopelessness. However, we need to recall that task difficulty, according to Weiner (2018), was assumed to be imposed from the perspective of an actor and therefore likely to be perceived as ‘external’. Both dimensions ‘external’ and ‘uncontrollable’ associated with task difficulty, therefore make it less pronounced in its effects. Thus, these external causes, such as ‘(...) poor teaching, or test difficulty, may create less negative affect and are less harmful to pride and self-esteem, but they are likely to impair motivation nonetheless’ (Perry & Hamm, 2017, p. 63; see also: Weiner, 1985, 1986, notably Chapter 5).

Finally, we could speculate that these affective reactions become further defused when attributing causes of failure to bad luck. Where a cause of failure is ascribed to uncontrollable, unstable, and external factors, the affective reaction is likely to be minor. Feelings of shame (uncontrollable) are likely to be neutralized by the perceived combination with an external dimension that is likely to have minimal impact on self-esteem. And the unstable dimension, where a recurrent failure is perceived to be unlikely, further neutralizes these affective reactions, making feelings of hopelessness most unlikely (Weiner, 1985, 1986, notably Chapter 5).

So a recurrent theme in the origin of these emotions is not so much the cause to which they are attributed: ability, effort, task difficulty, or luck; it is rather the property or dimension attributed to that cause that determines the expression and intensity of a subsequent affective reaction: perceived controllability, stability, and locus. Thus, we observed that guilt and shame (and gratitude in successful settings) “(...) are connected with the controllability dimension, (...) feelings of hopelessness (hopefulness) are associated with causal stability”, and “the emotion of pride and feelings of self-esteem are linked with the locus dimension of causality” (Weiner, 1985, p. 561).

In parallel with previous observations, successful completion of a difficult task would then lead especially to hopefulness (stability) and pride (locus), although the dimensions ‘uncontrollable’ in combination with ‘external’ are expected to influence these affective outcomes. As stated by Weiner: “Success and failure at skill tasks most usually are ascribed to ability and effort. (...) Inasmuch as the causes of a prior success are perceived as relatively stable given skill-related tasks, future success should be anticipated with greater certainty and there will be increments in aspiration level and expectancy judgments” (Weiner, 1985, p. 557).

Likewise, when attributing success to luck, these feelings are equally moderated, especially by the unstable dimension of attributed causes. As commented by Weiner: “(...) success at chance tasks tends to be ascribed to an unstable factor. The actor is likely to reason, ‘I had good luck last time, but that probably will not happen again’. Expectancy therefore should not rise and indeed could drop following a positive outcome” (Weiner, 1985, p. 557).
In observing the causal dimension of *controllability*, Weiner observes: “(...) Guilt arises from a particular act that is under volitional control and produces a desire to make amends (...). Shame, on the other hand, is elicited as a result of an act or a characteristic of the self that is not under volitional control and produces a desire to withdraw. Relating these differences to the dominant attributions of success and failure, (...) guilt follows when failure is ascribed to lack of effort, whereas shame is produced when failure is ascribed to lack of ability” (Weiner, 1986, pp. 152-153).

Referring to causal *stability*, Weiner states: “(...) if the future is anticipated to remain as bad as the past, then hopelessness is experienced” (Weiner, 1985, p. 563).

Commenting on the relation between causal *locus* and self-esteem: “A voluminous attributional literature (...) documents existence of a *hedonic bias*, or a tendency for individuals to ascribe success to internal factors and failure to external factors. As Harvey and Weary (1981) noted, ‘by taking credit for good acts and denying blame for bad outcomes, the individual presumably may be able to enhance or protect his or her self-esteem’ (p. 33). Pride and personal esteem therefore are self-reflective emotions, linked with the locus dimension of causality” (Weiner, 1985, pp. 561-562).

See exhibit ➔

As previously mentioned in Chapter 7, Weiner’s attributional theory of motivation and emotion proposes: “(...) that a motivational sequence is initiated by an outcome that the person interprets as positive (goal attainment) or negative (nonattainment). (...) If the outcome was unexpected or negative, a causal search is undertaken to determine why the outcome occurred. (...) The causal decision reached may elicit a unique affective reaction” (Weiner, 1986, p. 161, 163).

The reaction is elicited, not by the attributed cause but by the associated causal dimensions. “Causal dimensions have psychological consequences, being related to expectancy and affect” (Weiner, 1986, p. 163). Thus:
- *Controllability*: associated with the affect of guilt (controllable) and shame (uncontrollable);
- *Stability*: associated with the affect of hopelessness (stable-negative) and hopefulness (stable-positive) (however, see also: Weiner, 2018);
- *Locus*: associated with the affect of pride and self-esteem, where internal ascriptions elicit greater effects (positive, negative) than do external attributions. (Weiner, 1986, notably Chapter 5).

For a shorter overview, see: Weiner, 1985; 2018.
Let us position these thoughts, once again, within the Model of Motivation. According to the Model, the way we perceive the unexpected event from Reality following Impact not only produces a re-orientation in a Phase of Externally-Evoked Self-Assessment, as seen in Chapter 6, it also leads to strategies aimed at addressing these perceptions in a Phase of Anticipated Change, as covered in Chapter 7. And according to attribution theory, assigning attributions to these perceived events, in turn, leads to cognitive and affective reactions as a resultant of the Impact of Reality. And these reactions can be made to impair or improve subsequent action, behavior, motivation in what we defined as a renewed cycle in the Process of Motivation.

These findings in attribution theory could imply that affective reactions towards Reality, in a Phase of Dedication, may originate in the strategies we choose in a Phase of Anticipated Change, following the assessments we make of the extent in which the Process of achieving our Goal is affected by Impact, and of the repercussions it has on the initial parameters defined to achieve that Goal.\(^1\)

To summarize, then, it is not so much assigning failure to lack of ability or effort that appears to determine the emotion, but rather the property or causal dimension associated with the cause. In terms of the Model of Motivation, this would imply that in the sequence of events assumed to occur in the Process of Motivation (evaluation in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment; defining subsequent strategies in a Phase of Anticipated Change) the affective reaction towards Reality in a Phase of Dedication would largely depend on the strategy defined in a Phase of Anticipated Change, or, in terms of attribution theory, on the causal attributes perceived and assigned by the individual. The specific properties of those attributes define whether Impact of Reality can be harmful or negative, or uplifting and positive, and thus supporting one’s feelings of esteem (locus). And these specific properties can further degrade, sustain or increase those feelings (stability) or generate feelings of shame or guilt (controllability).

So, we observed Weiner’s attributional theory on the personal causal inferences we make and the emotional effects they have, especially in achievement strivings, when either failures or unexpected outcomes bring us to contemplate the courses of our actions. In subsequent years, Weiner further extended his attributional theory of motivation and emotion from an *intrapersonal* perspective, to an attributional theory of *interpersonal* or social motivation, where these causal

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\(^1\) However, as stated earlier in Chapter 7, it is to be noted that Weiner’s attributional theory of motivation and emotion describes the process without making the assumption implicitly made here that there is intentionality in the strategies we use, and thus in the causal attributions we make, their associated dimensions and the outcomes they generate. As stated with precision by Weiner in summarizing his thoughts: “The theory (...) relates the structure of thinking to the dynamics of feeling and action” (Weiner, 1985, p. 548).
inferences are aimed primarily at others and their behaviors. This extended theory, however, exceeds the scope of our analysis in which we chose to focus only on the individual, hence the intrapersonal perspective in the Process of Motivation\(^1\)\(^2\).

Although the theory had considerable impact on psychology and the field of motivation, its influence gradually decreased in the last decades. Reflecting on the history of attribution theory and research, fifty years after the first publication of *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (Heider, 1958), Weiner stated in 2008: “It (...) is fair to state that attribution no longer is the dominant field of inquiry it once was, say in the 1970-1985 era” (Weiner, 2008, p. 151; see also: Graham, 1991; Weiner, 2019).

**See exhibit ➔**

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\(^1\) For an overview, reference is made to Weiner, 2006, where he commented on this extended theory: “(...) the interpersonal theory relates to social behaviors, primarily helping and aggression, and to social justice and punishment, but also to address other social phenomena including compliance, impression formation and stigmatization. In this theory, thoughts and emotions are about others, and behaviors such as helping, aggression, and punishment are directed toward these others” (Weiner, 2006, p. xvi).


\(^2\) It is noteworthy to observe that, within this Process of Interference, Weiner distinguished between the emotional reactions of an external interfering actor towards an individual, and those of the individual towards an actor, in response to interference. More on these subtle but essential differences when we cover Interference in subsequent Volumes of the Series.

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**The Lifespan of Theories**

Although attribution theory has had a prominent influence on psychology and the field of motivation, its influence gradually decreased in the last decades, to reappear however more recently in literature in the area of work motivation (Martinko & Mackey, 2019).

As commented on in a recent review of 65 papers: “(...) HR scholars have recently realized that understanding the process by which individuals explain the causes of behaviors and events provides insight into a host of HR-related issues” (Hewett, Shantz, Mundy & Alfes, 2018, p. 87).

It illustrates a phenomenon that has had only limited attention in literature: development in the field of motivation has not only been a gradually progressive expansion of knowledge, as insights obtained from research progressively grew in the field, but it has also been subject to shifts in interest and transitions in trends affecting development of theories in specific areas.

As in all human endeavors, science is not immune to changes incited by trends, interest, or personal preferences. *All too often, however, the unintended result of these shifts in attention also (and erroneously) suggests a decreased relevance of these areas in the field of motivation.*

For some interesting overviews on how personal relationships, history, interests have affected the field, see: Latham, 2007; Weiner, 2010, 2013.
How people behave, then, can to a large extent be predicted by the attributions they make and by the beliefs they hold. If one is inclined to perceive the effects of Impact from Reality (as proposed to occur in a Phase of Dedication) as more positive, they are reflected in the attributions made. And its repercussions on the Process of Motivation would be likewise; and vice versa.

One particular area that has been previously covered in Chapter 6, is on beliefs we hold about our capabilities, referred to as ‘self-efficacy beliefs’. As we saw, depending on those self-efficacy beliefs, how people tend to act can often be better predicted “(...) than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing, for these self-perceptions help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have” (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 100). One’s set of beliefs, then, much as the attributions we make, determine not only what we do, but also to a large extent how we perform. In line with propositions made in the Model of Motivation, the assertions we have (as defined in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment) and the inclinations we have (as defined in a Phase of Anticipated Change) determine the way we respond to Impact, notably in a Phase of Dedication. And these affective and cognitive reactions are reflected in our subsequent actions and achievements (conceptualized to occur in a renewed cycle of the Process of Motivation). And, as we shall see, how we subsequently come to perceive ourselves in the accomplishments we make.

These assertions we have, which typify our reactions to Reality, have been defined in social cognitive theory in terms of self-efficacy beliefs. If we are comfortable with the outcomes we perceive, subsequent experiences serve to further strengthen these beliefs, or, when in contrast to our expectations, lead to opposite reactions and subsequent amendments.

Thus, as covered in Chapter 6, we saw how self-efficacy not only brought us insights into how well we performed, but also how this ‘accumulation of knowledge’ of one’s potential and competence, through self-reflection, led to proactive strategies and foresight in actions and behaviors. So, self-efficacy not only brought us a personal reflection on one’s capabilities, it also meant translating those capabilities into effective performance in diverse settings and circumstances. It shaped our mind and made us persevere, or, in contrast, made us abandon our endeavors and give up in the face of failure, both at school (Pajares & Schunk, 2001) and in academic settings (Pajares, 1996, 1997).

If one is able to adapt adequately to a variety of circumstances, one has a “key personal resource in self-development, successful adaptation, and change. (...) Efficacy beliefs affect whether individuals think optimistically or pessimistically, in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways. Such beliefs affect people’s goals and aspirations, how well they motivate themselves, and their perseverance in the face of difficulties and adversity” (Bandura, 2006c, p. 4).
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These reactions to Reality are thus manifested in our tendencies or inclinations. According to social cognitive theory one can differentiate between individuals with high self-efficacy, and those with low self-efficacy beliefs.

See exhibit ➔

The gradual ‘accumulation of knowledge’ on one’s potential and competence, as observed in Chapter 6, then, not only fuels insights into one’s capabilities and the feasibility of future accomplishments, it also has lasting effects on how we seize opportunities or refrain and renounce from new challenges: “One of the important characteristics of successful individuals is that failure and adversity do not undermine their self-efficacy beliefs. This is because self-efficacy is not so much about learning how to succeed as it is about learning how to persevere when one does not succeed” (Pajares, 2006, p. 345).

As a consequence, these beliefs following Impact from Reality, in a reciprocal interaction according to social cognitive theory, also lead to subjective perceptions of the self. However, and distinct from constructs such as self-concept or self-esteem, these resulting subjective reactions are

1 And consequently, as seen previously in the exhibits on ‘learned helplessness’, ‘self-handicapping’, and ‘positive psychology’, Chapter 7, not only causal attributes but also inaccurate self-efficacy beliefs appear to be responsible for people shortchanging themselves personally, socially and academically (Pajares, 2006).

5.2. Social cognitive theories

Self-efficacy, covered earlier in Chapter 6, can be defined as: “subjective convictions for successfully executing a course of action to achieve a desired outcome” (Ahn & Bong, 2019, p. 66, Table 3.1).

In these convictions, one can differentiate between individuals with high self-efficacy beliefs and those with low self-efficacy beliefs.

Those with high self-efficacy beliefs approach difficult tasks “(...) as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. (...) [They] set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, and heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. Moreover, they more quickly recover their confidence after failures or setbacks (...)” (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 101).

“Conversely, people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem” (ibid., p. 101). Thus: “People of low efficacy are easily convinced of the futility of effort in the face of difficulties. They quickly give up trying” (Bandura, 2006c, p. 4).

One’s convictions thus have profound and lasting effects on the level of accomplishment that individuals finally attain.
clearly differentiated in social cognitive theory from the construct of self-efficacy. “Judgments of self-efficacy can (...) result in emotional responses but, unlike self-concept or self-esteem, these emotions stay as separate constructs and do not comprise self-efficacy beliefs (Bong & Clark, 1999; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003)” (Ahn & Bong, 2019, p. 65)1.

So, much in line with the assumptions made about a Phase of Dedication, social cognitive theory perceives these subjective and emotional outcomes of these appraisals to be distinct entities.

In summary, then, achievements affected by context and circumstances, in the form of an intruding Reality as proposed in the Model of Motivation, appear to instigate a wide range of cognitive and affective psychological reactions, according to both attribution theory and social cognitive theory. Both theories extend insights by observing the effects of these psychological reactions, defined as ‘primary evaluations’ of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ following Impact from Reality.

These cognitive and affective reactions have a profound influence on the Process through which Motivation unfolds. They do not only proceed into subsequent behavior and performance as the Process progresses into a new cycle, as proposed in the Model of Motivation. Cognitions, affects and behaviors, instigated by Impact from Reality, also, and most explicitly, leave their trace on the way we come to perceive ourselves.

Perceptions of self refer to the construct of self-concept, which is one of the cornerstone constructs in the social sciences (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019). But despite its centrality, it has been the source of debate and longstanding discussions both on the construct and on its far-reaching implications for self-perception and improvement of performance and achievement (Marsh & Craven, 2005).

1 However, although both constructs are differentiated from each other and conceptually made into distinct entities, they are clearly related. As commented on by Pajares and Schunk: “Because one’s self-concept includes a self-evaluation of competence, it is clear that, conceptually, self-efficacy is a critical ingredient of self-concept. How could it be otherwise? As we reflect on how we feel about ourselves, either in general or within a specified domain, we naturally will place great import on the confidence we possess to solve problems and accomplish the tasks at hand” (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 104).

It must be noted that both concepts do not always relate to each other: “Some students may feel highly efficacious in mathematics but without the corresponding positive feelings of self-worth, in part because they may take no pride in accomplishments in this area” (ibid. p. 105).
To fully appreciate the extent of these implications, let us consider the two main options that have emerged from literature, when observing the self in relation to achievement: a number of studies have stressed the importance of high achievement on the self, whereas other studies, in contrast, emphasized effects of self-esteem and positive self-appraisal on subsequent achievement (Calsyn & Kenny, 1977). Controversies centered on the question of what appears to come first: a great experience of success that brings pride and a boost to the self and one’s self-esteem, or rather the other way around, where nurturing one’s self-esteem encourages us to engage on challenging tasks that would lead us to successful achievements. An answer to this question has profound implications, not only on motivation but also in the field of educational psychology, as it provides important insights into measures for improving achievement. Are we to seek great experiences of success by providing challenging environments, or should we rather aim at boosting self-esteem by providing circumstances and opportunities for self-enhancement that eventually lead to improved performance?

Although the question refers to a Process of Interference (as it aims at how to address Motivation), recent developments in thinking on the construct of self-concept have an important bearing on the Model in its approach to the Process of Motivation. According to the Model of Motivation, where Motivation is assumed to progress into a Process of circularity following a Phase of Dedication, the relation between achievement and self-concept is expected to emerge from this circular Process. Thus, the Model of Motivation proposes that in the relation between achievement and self-concept, it is neither the one nor the other that is assumed to predominate, but both constructs in reciprocity.

The Model of Motivation assumes that in the cyclical nature of the Process, experiences of success in seeking Goal attainment through various assessments in consecutive Phases lead to cognitive and affective reactions following Impact from Reality that enhance perceptions of self, which, in turn, in a renewed cycle of the Process, lead to further amendments to the Goal and investments in Effort and pursuit of further challenges, aimed at maintaining those achievements, as we shall come to observe in the next Chapters.

In findings from literature, this cyclical nature appears to be confirmed. Through works, especially by Herb Marsh and his colleagues (Marsh, 1990a, 1990b, 1993, 2008; Marsh, Byrne & Yeung, 1999; Marsh & Craven, 2005, 2006; Marsh & O’Mara, 2008; Marsh & Yeung, 1997), the reciprocal nature between

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1 A so-called ‘skill development model’ suggests that academic achievement influences self-beliefs, whereas self-beliefs do not influence achievement. A ‘self-enhancement model’ proposes that self-beliefs influence academic achievement, whereas achievement does not influence self-beliefs (Calsyn & Kenny, 1977; see reviews in Valentine & Dubois, 2005).
achievement and the concept of self has become increasingly prevalent in current thinking.

Developments leading to these insights have extended over years. For over a century, theorists had disputed the nature of self-concept (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019). In discussions that started in the 1950s, it was initially argued that self-concept was unidimensional, with self-concept captured in single constructs such as self-esteem, self-appraisal and self-worth. The concept, however, appeared too broad in its conceptualization: “(...) By the 1970s the area was lacking in sound methodology, measurement instruments, definition, and theoretical perspectives (e.g. Shavelson Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie, 1979)” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 37). In response, Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton (1976) proposed a multidimensional model, with general self-concept divided into two components: academic self-concept (or ASC) and non-academic self-concept (non-ASC) (see also: Byrne, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 1996).

From these refinements in the construct of self-concept, more precise and so-called ‘domain-specific’ conceptualizations emerged, diversifying the unidimensional representation of the self into the multidimensional construct it now is believed to be

Despite this growing support, “(...) there exists a strongly held, contrary perspective suggesting that self-esteem in particular has little or no positive influence on achievement and other desirable outcomes, and may even be counterproductive (...)” (Marsh & Craven, 2005, p. 28, notably referring to Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). But these studies appeared to have focused on global measures of self-esteem and excluded research focusing on domain specific measures of self-concept (See review: Marsh & Craven, 2005).
The various evaluations in preceding Phases of the Process of Motivation not only led to cognitive and affective reactions towards Reality, they also left their mark on perceptions of the self. In observing literature, three constructs appear to be central (Byrne, 1996): Self-efficacy, (described earlier in Chapter 6), self-esteem, and self-concept.

Self-esteem is defined as global evaluative judgments of oneself, which include relatively stable subjective perceptions in terms of satisfaction and recognition, acceptance or rejection of the self (Ahn & Bong, 2019; Marsh & Craven, 2005). A further diversification is made in literature into the concept of academic self-esteem, defined as: “evaluative judgments of oneself in achievements situations, which include one’s feelings of and satisfaction toward oneself” (Ahn & Bong, 2019, p. 66, Table 3.1).

Self-concept, in literature, is more specific and related to particular domains of knowledge, notably the diversification into ‘verbal’ or ‘mathematics’. It refers to relatively stable perceptions of one’s specific competencies on these domains with resulting emotional reactions (Ahn & Bong, 2019). Self-concept is further diversified into two important constructs:

- **academic self-concept** (or ASC), defined as “knowledge and perceptions about one’s competencies and attributes in achievement situations, along with resultant emotional reactions” (Ahn & Bong, 2019, p. 66, Table 3.1). A further partition is made in subject-specific self-concepts:
  - **math ASC**: math self-concept as one’s ASC in math-related achievement situations;
  - **verbal ASC**: verbal self-concept as one’s ASC in verbal-related achievement situations.

- **non-academic self-concept** (or non-ASC), covering a range of specified areas, including social self-concept, emotional self-concept, physical self-concept.

See also: Marsh, 2008; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh, Byrne & Yeung, 1999.
So, in sum, these findings confirm the idea that Impact from Reality not only leads to cognitive and affective expressions, but also to perceptions of Self, which in turn, as the Process of Motivation progresses into a renewed cycle, affect not only the Goal that has been set, but also investments in Effort, and consequently in behavior, performance and achievement.

Now, these refinements to the conceptualization of the self revealed an additional and disconcerting effect, related to what we have observed earlier when analyzing the effects of Impact in Chapter 5. These effects in reaction to the Impact of Reality have been referred to in literature as the ‘big-fish-little-pond effect’, or BFLPE. In the study that laid the foundations of the BFLPE, Marsh and Parker (1984) found “(...) that students form their ASCs by comparing their academic achievements with those of their classmates. Thus, whereas there is a positive relation between individual ability and ASC, class- or school-average is negatively related to ASC (...)” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 47). This implies that effects of Reality are enhanced or magnified by the circumstances in which Reality manifests itself. To illustrate: If one attends a highly competitive school where only the ‘best’ are admitted to enroll, these magnifying effects of comparing to others that are ‘equally good’ have a detrimental effect on perceptions of the self. As stated by Marsh and his colleagues: “Consistent with the BFLPE, equally able students had lower ASCs in high-ability schools than those in low-ability schools. (...) Additionally, the BFLPE has been shown to exist at different levels of education, both in primary schools (e.g. Marsh, Chessor, Craven & Roche, 1995) and in high schools (e.g. Marsh, Köller & Baumert, 2001)” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 47; See also overviews in: Marsh & Craven, 2002; Marsh & Hau, 2003). And these findings appear to have a prolonged effect (Marsh & O’Mara, 2010) that is stable and persistent over time (Marsh, Köller & Baumert, 2001).

Referring to the Model of Motivation, Reality in its Impact appears to provide achievement-related information that extends beyond one’s own accomplishments to include the achievements of important others, thereby serving as an extended frame of reference.

These findings, together with previous observations made in Chapter 5, reveal an unexpected and disturbing outcome: that Reality in its ‘multifaceted’ appearance, ranging from a podium on which one seeks to demonstrate performance, to a stage consisting of individuals and groups with which one seems to compare oneself, that this wide range in which it manifests itself underlines again the importance Reality has, not only on the Process of Motivation, but on all aspects of our daily lives.
Effects of the big-fish-little-pond effect (BFLPE) are profound and far-reaching. An example to illustrate.

As these effects appear to affect not only one’s perceptions of self, but also other areas related to academic achievement with prolonged effects over time, the implications of these findings are many. However, to simply conclude avoiding highly competitive environments appears to be too simple, with very little evidence to support such strategies (Marsh & Seaton, 2015). Other factors appear to be involved, moderating those effects (for an overview of these ‘counterbalancing effects’, see: Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Baumert & Köller, 2007). But one conclusion can be drawn, however: “These findings imply that attending a high-ability school has negative effects on more educational outcomes than just ASC alone, meaning that such students may not be reaching their full academic potential” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 48).

Attending highly selective educational institutions does not imply one will reach one’s full academic potential.

In an extensive illustration of the BFLPE, Marsh and colleagues comment: “Consider this example: Alex and Bill are above-average mathematics students of similar ability, but Alex attends an academically selective school and Bill attends a mixed-ability school. (...) Bill’s mathematics ability is extremely good compared to his classmates, so his mathematics self-concept is high, as he is a big fish in a little pond. However, in Alex’s school there are many highly capable mathematics students and, compared to them, his mathematics ability is average. As a result, Alex’s mathematics self-concept is low, as he is a little fish in a big pond. Here we see the frame of reference of the BFLPE at work: by attending the academically selective school Alex feels less competent in mathematics than Bill, even though they are both of similar mathematics ability” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 47).

These negative effects on perception of the self appear to extend to many other educational outcomes, including one’s aspirations, college attendance and occupational aspirations (Marsh, 1991).

See also: Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Craven, 2002; Marsh & Parker, 1984; Marsh & Seaton, 2015.
Reality, then, plays an essential role in motivation. Not only influencing the courses of action we undertake, but also affecting us in the way we perceive ourselves.

Reality steers us, and influences us. It makes us perform, achieve and excel, but appears also to have distinct properties to obstruct, frustrate and deregulate. Clearly, there is a vast amount of variation in the way Reality can affect us.

In this interaction with Reality, we ourselves played a distinct role in the Process of Motivation, notably in the perceptions we have from Reality following Impact. But we saw from various theories in literature that Reality also plays a decisive role in this interactive, reciprocal Process.

To end our analysis of the literature on perceived effects from Reality, we return to one of the most widely cited theories on motivation (Adams, Little & Ryan, 2017; Boggiano, 1998; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Self-determination theory, which has been covered previously a number of times (notably on the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence), has played a prominent role in observing these effects from Reality as they relate to motivation. In an extension to their theory, Self-determination theory has defined the effects of a variety of external influences on motivation, and provided a taxonomy for these effects.

See exhibit 4.4. Self-determination theory

Self-determination theory is different from other approaches to motivation in its emphasis on the different types and sources of motivation. Rather than defining motivation as a ‘unitary phenomenon’, self-determination theory suggests that some forms of motivation are entirely volitional, whereas others can be entirely external. “Clearly, sources of motivation differ, as do the effects of being energized by these different motives. Put simply, different motives (...) vary in the phenomenal sources that initiate them, the affects and experiences that therefore accompany them, and their behavioral consequences (...)” (Ryan & Deci, 2018, p.14).

Self-determination theory, therefore, clearly differentiates the concept of motivation in order to consider these effects of different types of motivation on these outcomes.

To differentiate these types of motivation, self-determination makes use of an autonomy – control continuum, where types of motivation are characterized in terms of the extent to which they represent autonomous versus controlled regulation. Within this taxonomy, three main types of motivation occur:

• Intrinsic motivation;
• Extrinsic motivation;
• Amotivation.

(Continued)
Depending on the way these external influences manifest themselves, self-determination distinguishes different expressions in types of motivation, depending on these differing sources.

Where Reality plays a role in addressing Motivation, there are several gradations one could observe in the extent to which this outside interference can affect the Process of Motivation. However, at the start of our study, we made a clear distinction between the Process of Motivation itself and the Process of Interference aimed at addressing Motivation in an extensive variety of manifestations.

This distinction that was made has been less prominent, or even absent, in the various theories that were observed in subsequent Chapters covering the Phases of the Model. Although the differentiation into various forms of motivation proposed by self-determination theory seems to diverge from the assumptions made in the Model of Motivation, we will come to realize that the expression in which Motivation uniquely manifests itself can be highly influenced by the form in which it is being addressed through a Process of Interference.

1 In addition, reference is made to processes of internalization and integration of extrinsic regulations, see: Ryan & Deci, 2018, Chapter 8.

2 The taxonomy of regulatory styles has also been referred to as ‘the self-determination continuum’, diversifying types of motivation and types of regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2002).
Nonetheless, in the proposed Model of Motivation, the Process is assumed to progress through its Phases in a specific format, where differing expressions are only generated by the Goal that has been set. And distinct from this Process of Motivation, a large variety of possible approaches can be observed to address this Process. When we observe how this Process of Interference manifests itself later in the ‘Series on Motivation’, we will cover more extensively these propositions for a taxonomy made by self-determination theory.

We set ourselves to observe theories capturing what we defined as ‘primary evaluations’, experienced according to the Model in reaction to Impact, thus from, not towards Reality, which were defined as ‘secondary evaluations’, to be covered later in the Series.

These theories on cognitive and affective reactions experienced from Reality extended on our observations of attribution theories in Chapter 7, and social cognitive theories from Chapter 6. Weiner’s attributional theory of motivation and emotion brought additional insights, notably into affective outcomes of the attributions in search of causality in achievement-related settings, which in turn led to subsequent behavior, or ‘motivation’. Social cognitive theory appeared to be more inclined towards the cognitive reactions following Impact, as proposed by the Model. These cognitive and affective reactions determine what we do and how we perform.

These primary evaluations, these affective and cognitive reactions to Impact from Reality, also appeared to profoundly affect perceptions of self, and self-concept, in various layered ‘strata’ of awareness and different settings and ‘domains’.

As in the preceding two Chapters, we can summarize how theories from literature thus extended insights into the assessment of Reality in a Phase of Dedication, as proposed by the Model of Motivation. 

See exhibit next page

At the end of our exposé in this Chapter, describing a Phase of Dedication and the nature of our reactions towards our surrounding Reality, especially when perceived as Significant, we came to realize the implications, not only at a personal level, but also for the effects it could have on our surroundings. We were surprised by the intensity of these expressions, and it appeared that the more Significant Reality was perceived to be, the more excessive our reaction, both in a positive, but also in a negative sense.
Two theories provided further insights into the assumed evaluative effects in a Phase of Dedication: affective, as elaborated on by an attributional theory of motivation and emotion, cognitive, as further described in social cognitive theory.

According to attributional theory, achievement outcomes give rise to causal exploration, as covered in Chapter 7.

Attributed perceived causes have specific properties, or causal dimensions:

According to social cognitive theory, in a reflective proactive process, reflection occurs on personal efficacy, as covered in Chapter 6.

These efficacy beliefs give rise to a dichotomy in types of:

- Low self-efficacy beliefs
- High self-efficacy beliefs

- The efficacy beliefs either enhance or impede subsequent reactions
- The causal dimensions bring about specific affective reactions
- And cognitions and emotions, in turn, affect behavior and ‘motivation’
- Perceptions of self, and self-concept, thus manifested in reciprocity

Fig. 8.4. Schematic overview of concepts and constructs from theories in literature extending a Phase of Dedication in the Model of Motivation

Outcomes of a Phase of Dedication

Chapter 8 - In Search of Redemption, Phase 8 - A Phase of Dedication
We have covered theories that not only provide a confirmation for the proposed Processes involved in a Phase of Dedication, but also present a more diverse view on the patterns of thinking, feeling and (eventually) acting that follows the Impact from Reality as suggested in the Model.

Findings from research on these theoretical insights are observed next. We will cover those from research on the *attributional theory of motivation and emotion*, on *social cognitive theory*, and on findings obtained from research on perceptions of *the self*, notably in achievement-related contexts. For research on *self-determination theory* and the taxonomy of regulatory styles (or motivation), we are to refer to coverage within the framework of a Process of Interference, as research explicitly related to the taxonomy has been mainly conducted from a perspective in which the individual is addressed according to these various regulatory styles (for overviews of findings over an extensive range of settings, see: Ryan & Deci, 2018).

As to the observed affective reactions in an *attributional theory of motivation and emotion*, Weiner (1985) noted: “(...) the bulk of the pertinent attribution-emotion research relates causal dimensions, rather than specific causes, to affects” (p. 561), in line with the observations previously made in Section 2. Although Weiner also observed affective states in interpersonal settings, we focus primarily on findings that are restricted to intrapersonal experiences, as interactions with others relate to a Process of Interference, as indicated earlier. We thus observe findings on the causal dimensions of controllability, stability and locus.

First, however, research confirmed the emotion that initiates causal search (as covered previously in Chapter 7): studies revealed that “(...) success at achievement-related activities was associated with the affect of happy regardless of the cause of that outcome, and failure seemed to be related to frustration and sadness” (Weiner, 1985, p. 561; see also: Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1978, 1979).

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1 These affective states are either non-related to achievement of a personal goal or instigated by activities of others. For more on these interpersonal affective reactions, see Weiner, 1982, 1985; Weiner & Graham, 1984.

2 These emotions were briefly referred to in Section 2 as ‘outcome dependent- attribution independent’, following the outcome of an achievement-related event initiating causal search, that are distinct from emotions that are to follow the attributional process.
Findings from research on controllability where found to confirm a relation with the affect of guilt especially in controllable settings, where personal responsibility is felt (e.g. lack of effort), and shame in circumstances perceived to be uncontrollable (e.g. lack of ability) (Brown & Weiner, 1984; Hoffman, 1976, 1982; Jagacinski & Nicholls, 1984; Weiner, Graham & Chandler, 1982; Wicker, Payne & Morgan, 1983). It must be noted, however, that cross-cultural differences in the expression and meaning of these attribution-related emotions have increasingly been reported in more recent literature (for an overview: Wong & Tsai, 2007).

There are not many studies of stability-related emotions in achievement settings (Graham, 2020; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012). The association to the causal dimension of stability with the affect of hopelessness and resignation (stable-negative) and hopefulness (stable-positive) appeared in earlier research studies by Weiner and his colleagues (Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1978, 1979).

The relation between causal locus and the affect of pride and self-esteem has been observed in research, linking positive outcomes to enhanced, and negative outcomes to decreased perceptions of the self (Stipek, 1983; Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1978, 1979; see also: Oades-Sese, Matthews & Lewis, 2014; Tracy & Robins, 2007), where internal ascriptions elicit greater effects (positive, negative) than do external attributions. With further confirmation for the tendency mentioned earlier to ascribe success to an internal locus and failure to external factors (Harvey & Weary, 1981).

A word of caution, however, is needed about these findings, as these linked emotions do not necessarily always follow causal ascriptions, and conversely, an emotion may be experienced in the absence of the assumed linked antecedent (Weiner, 1985). Nonetheless, findings give substantial reason to believe that the assumed linkages are prevalent in most achievement-related settings.

Which, subsequently, might add to our assumptions about causal ascriptions and the strategies used in a Phase of Anticipated Change as a possible source for the ways in which affect towards Reality is manifested in this Phase of Dedication.

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1 As summarized by Graham (2020): “The comparisons are primarily between collectivist Asian cultures like China and Japan and individualistic cultures as typified by the United States. For example, pride is less likely to be experienced for personal successes in collectivist societies and more likely to be felt in reaction to the successes of one’s close ingroup members” (p. 9).

2 As mentioned in Section 2, the phenomenon is referred to as ‘hedonic bias’, also known as ‘self-serving attribution bias’, ‘ego enhancement’, ‘ego defensiveness’, and ‘beneffectance’ (Weiner, 1992; see also: Bradley, 1978; Miller & Ross, 1975; Zuckerman, 1979; For a critical review: Malle, 2006).
Research on ‘primary evaluations’ experienced in reaction to Impact, as proposed by the Model of Motivation, has been predominantly focused on cognitive effects in studies related to social cognitive theory.

As observed, it is not so much our ‘actual ability’ that prevents us from performing and reaching an objective, but rather our beliefs and confidence to attain an objective that has been set (Bandura, 1997). Beliefs in personal efficacy are essential, not only in goal attainment and achievement, but also in a range of associated areas: “Do beliefs of personal efficacy contribute to human functioning? This issue has been extensively investigated by a variety of methodologies and analytic procedures. Nine large-scale meta-analyses have been conducted across diverse spheres of functioning. These spheres include work-related performances in both laboratory and field studies (Sadri & Robertson, 1993; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), psychosocial functioning in children and adolescents (Holden, Moneher, Schinke & Barker, 1990), academic achievement and persistence (Milton, Brown & Lent, 1991)(...). The evidence from (...) meta-analyses is consistent in showing that efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the level of motivation and performance” (Bandura & Locke, 2003, p. 87).

These self-efficacy beliefs influence the personal goals that one sets (Carson & Carson, 1993; Lerner & Locke, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000; Zimmerman, Bandura & Martinez-Pons, 1992; Zimmerman & Cleary, 2006). The higher one’s self-efficacy beliefs in performing well on a task, the less difficult the goal is perceived to be (Lee & Bobko, 1992).

These self-efficacy beliefs, according to social cognitive theory, were thought to differentiate between individuals with high self-efficacy and those with low self-efficacy beliefs. Research findings appear to confirm these assumptions. As observed in research on goal-setting theory, it was found that people with higher self-efficacy are more willing to approach challenging tasks or goals (Berry & West, 1993; Pajares, 1996; Tang & Reynolds, 1993), exert more effort in those tasks (Zimmerman, 2000), find and use better strategies (Latham, Winters & Locke, 1994; Wood & Bandura, 1989; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990), persist longer (Zimmerman, 2000), and experience lower levels of anxiety in those tasks (Bandura, 1997) than did people with low self-efficacy beliefs (Locke & Latham, 1990; Sejits & Latham, 2001). As stated in summary by Latham (2007), self-efficacy was “(...) positively associated with the difficulty level of the goals that are set, goal commitment, and subsequent performance” (p. 83).

1 However, it has been noted that although efficacy beliefs have a generalized functional value, “(...) how they are developed and structured, the ways in which they are exercised, and the purposes to which they are put vary cross-culturally” (Bandura, 2002, p. 273). As concluded by Klassen (2004a, 2004b), individuals from collectivist cultures tend to assess their self-efficacy lower than those from individualistic cultures (see also: Ahn & Bong, 2019; Pajares, 2007).
As a consequence, these self-efficacy beliefs, according to social cognitive theory, also affect subjective perceptions of the self. Although it must be noted that “(...) empirical efforts to distinguish between self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy beliefs have met with only limited success (for a review, see Byrne, 1996)” (Valentine & DuBois, 2005, p. 55).

Research on perceptions of the self had at first reported moderate to weak relationships between self-concept and academic achievements (Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). As we saw in Section 2, however, “(...) in many studies during those years (...) researchers compared general, or global, self-concept with academic achievement” (Pajares & Schunk, 2005, p. 109).

Following the reconceptualization of the concept of the self into a multidimensional and domain-specific construct, research findings appeared that supported these diversifications (Marsh & O’Neill, 1984).

And this, in turn, as previously seen, enabled to demonstrate the relation between these domain-specific constructs related to academic self-concept and achievement (see overviews in: Marsh, 1993; Marsh & Craven, 1997). Differentiated measures enabled analysis of domain-specific responses. It was found that grades in English, mathematics, and science were correlated with matching areas of academic self-concept (Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). “Marsh (1992) extended these earlier studies by evaluating relations between more specific components of academic self-concept and school performance in eight core school subjects. (...) Consistently with predictions, Marsh found that correlations between matching areas of achievement and self-concept were substantial for all eight content areas (...) and substantially less than correlations between nonmatching areas of academic self-concept and achievement” (Marsh & Craven, 2005, p. 20). Thus, the higher one’s mathematics self-concept (math-ASC) the higher one’s performance in math-related contexts, or the higher one’s verbal self-concept (verb-ASC) the higher the achievement in these areas. And vice versa, linking achievement to domain-specific ASC (see also: Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller & Baumert, 2006).

Having thus established that self-concept and achievement are substantially correlated, “(...) the key question became whether a causal link existed between the two: was one the cause or effect of the other?” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 44).

Refinements to the construct of self-concept enabled further research which confirmed a reciprocity between both constructs of achievement and self-concept (Chen, Yeh, Hwang & Lin, 2013; Huang, 2011; Pinxten, De Fraine, Van Damme & D’Haenens, 2010; Valentine, 2002; Valentine & DuBois, 2005; Valentine, DuBois & Cooper, 2004).
As recently summarized by Marsh and his colleagues: “The research evidence (...) has grown steadily, showing that prior self-concept and subsequent achievement are positively related, as are prior achievement and subsequent self-concept (...). Consistent with ASC theory and research, it is not surprising that prior achievement has an effect on ASC. However, [a] meta-analysis revealed that the effect of prior ASC on subsequent achievement, after controlling for the effects of prior achievement, was also highly significant overall and positive in 90 percent of the studies they considered” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, p. 45, referring to a meta-analysis by Valentine, DuBois & Cooper, 2004, commented on in: Valentine & DuBois, 2005; see also: Marsh & Craven, 2005).

Thus, research appears to confirm the effects that occur as proposed by the Model of Motivation, following Impact, the subsequent evaluations of achievement and the effects on perceptions of self, which in turn, through the assumed cyclical nature of the Process of Motivation, affects performance and achievement, which subsequently affects perceptions of self over subsequent cycles.

Finally, as observed in the previous Section, these findings appeared to extend further to what was referred to as the ‘BFLPE’, where the reciprocity between ASC and a student’s own academic achievements appeared to be influenced also by the accomplishments of a student’s classmates or peers (Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Parker, 1984). Since then, research has provided further support for these earlier findings (Marsh & Craven, 2002; Marsh & Seaton, 2015; Marsh, Seaton, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Hau, O’Mara & Craven, 2008; Zeidner & Schleyer, 1999). Research on the BFLPE suggests long-term effects (Marsh & O’Mara, 2010; Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Baumert & Köller, 2007) that appear stable and persistent over time (Marsh, Köller & Baumert, 2001; however, see also: Dai & Rin, 2008).

So, these findings indicate not only that there appears to be a reciprocity between self-concept and achievement, but also that accomplishments of others, as expressed in the construct of Reality, serve as a frame of reference or standard of comparison used to form one’s self-concept. And when these accomplishments are perceived to be more competent, the effects appear to be detrimental.

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1 In addition, research has provided support for a cross-cultural generalizability of the reciprocal effects between academic self-concept and achievement constructs (Marsh, Hau & Kong, 2002).

2 Moreover, there is considerable support for the generalizability of negative effects of the BFLPE in cross-cultural studies (Marsh & Craven, 2002; Marsh & Hau, 2003; Marsh, Parker & Pekrun, 2018; Marsh, Seaton, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Hau, O’Mara & Craven, 2008; Nagengast & Marsh, 2012; Seaton, Marsh & Craven, 2009, 2010), thus, “demonstrating that the BFLPE is one of psychology’s most cross-culturally universal phenomena (...)” (Marsh, Seaton, Dicke, Parker & Horwood, 2019, pp. 48-49).
Thus, these research results confirm the reciprocal nature of both constructs, indicating, as proposed by the Model of Motivation, that achievement-related outcomes affect perceptions of self; and these perceptions, in turn, influence performance and achievement in various contexts. But it also seems to extend the way in which Reality manifests itself far beyond its appearance as dictated by circumstances. In congruence with earlier findings from Chapter 5, the Impact of Reality as evaluated in a Phase of Dedication appears to be much broader, and to affect much more aspects of our being, than at first anticipated.

In the next Chapters, we will come to realize the extent of its influence, and the implications it has in our daily lives. And beyond.
Motivation - Mechanisms of the Mind and their Quest for Expression

The eighth Phase in the Model of Motivation is a ‘Phase of Dedication’, which has two distinctive features: it evaluates Reality, and this evaluation also produces a specific outcome, referred to as a ‘Representation’.

Given the input provided by the previous two Phases, in a Phase of Dedication, an assessment is made in terms of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality for the Goal and for the various parameters initially set.

And these evaluations, in turn, produce an image of Reality through a so-called ‘Mechanism of Representation’.

A Phase of Dedication progresses, not in five, but four Stages, as opposed to the previous evaluations that occurred in a Phase of Externally Evoked Self-Assessment and a Phase of Anticipated Change. One Stage is excluded: a Stage evaluating Reality versus the Goal, as the assessment has previously occurred in a Phase of Impact, where perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ was expressed in terms of Discrepancy. The centrality of this assessment in a Phase of Impact underlines the prominent position of this Stage within the Process of Motivation. Thus, the assessment previously made in a Phase of Impact complements those that are made in a Phase of Dedication.

And the assessment of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality in a Phase of Dedication occurs in four distinct Stages, proceeding at each Stage in two steps: a ‘primary’ and a ‘secondary’ evaluation.

In a first Stage, a Stage of Appreciation, an assessment is made of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality, from a perspective of the Attitude initially set. Reality can be perceived as ‘supportive’ to the initial Attitude, leading to a primary evaluation of ‘being appreciated’ or ‘acknowledged’. And this, in turn, will lead to feelings of ‘appreciation’ towards Reality, as a secondary evaluation. In parallel, if Reality is perceived as ‘non-supportive’ this leads to feelings of ‘being denied’, or ‘ignored’, in a primary evaluation, in turn, leading to feelings of ‘contempt’ towards Reality in a secondary evaluation. Likewise, in a second Stage of Approbation an assessment is made of perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ from Reality, from a perspective of the ‘Energy’ or investment needed to reach the
Chapter 8 - In Search of Redemption, Phase 8 - A Phase of Dedication

Goal, thus reflecting its perceived value. Perceived ‘support’ or ‘non-support’ leads to primary evaluations of ‘being valued’ or ‘not valued’, and these feelings, in turn, are reacted upon in secondary evaluations, ‘valuing’, or ‘de-valuing’ Reality in return, thereby affecting the effects of Reality on the Process. A third Stage of Affirmation, is a reaction towards Reality, from a perspective of Achievement and Failure. In primary evaluations, Reality is perceived as either ‘confirming’ or ‘disapproving’ one’s choices in perceptions of ‘support’ and ‘non-support’, that are echoed by equivalent secondary evaluations. Finally, a Stage of Commitment, from a perspective of Satisfaction and Frustration, provides the individual with the experience of ‘worth’, versus feelings of being ‘unworthy’, depending on perceptions of Reality, which are likewise responded to with secondary reactions.

As a result of these four Stages, two sets of primary, and secondary evaluations emerge in perceptions of Reality. And these ‘intertwined’ primary and secondary evaluations serve to produce an image, or Representation, of Reality, that aims at either neutralizing or reinforcing the effects of Reality on the Process of Motivation. Perceived Significance of the Goal and Reality regulate and can intensify these primary and secondary evaluations, and thereby the nature of a Representation being made.

The input that is provided by successive evaluations in the three Phases following Impact from Reality, is used to make the necessary amendments to the Goal and the parameters initially set in a Phase of Expectancies, thereby returning to these initial Stages, and thus turning the Process of Motivation into a cyclical Process, where the sequence of Phases is re-initiated. As the Phase of Dedication initiates a return to the first Phases of the Process, it finalizes the sequence of successive Phases in the Process, and reveals for the first time the Process of Motivation as it emerges in its final form: A sequence of successive Phases, that is predominantly characterized by its cyclical nature.

Theory and research from literature on the effects of Impact, have further extended insights, notably in affective and cognitive reactions, that lead to behavioral consequences, which further influence these reactions.

These affective and cognitive reactions to Impact from Reality, appeared also to affect perceptions of self, and self-concept, in various layered ‘strata’ of awareness, and different settings and ‘domains’. In addition, it was found that Reality in its Impact appears to provide achievement-related information, that extends beyond one’s own accomplishments to include the achievements of important others, thereby serving as an extended frame of reference. These findings, together with previous observations made in Chapter 5, reveal an unexpected and disturbing outcome: that Reality as it manifests itself, profoundly affects the Process of Motivation.
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