

The Halo Effect and the Devil Effect

Today is the last teaching day of this week and you'll have an interesting learning day on Friday. I hope all of you enjoy the learning activities outside the campus. There are lots of interesting and meaningful things that are worth learning about around us. The following is an example.

Have you ever heard of the term "Halo Effect and Devil Effect"? I think most of you will answer "NO". "Halo" is a term used to describe an optical feature of the atmosphere. It is a large ring, made of very small ice crystals, surrounding the moon or the sun (日暈). A halo makes the sun or moon look bigger. "Devil" is a common term you all know very well. The Halo and the Devil Effect concepts are used by psychologists. These concepts are receiving more and more attention in this era of connection and relationship. They affect our relationship with others and may seriously influence a person's career.

The Halo Effect and the Devil Effect control how we look at or treat other people. When we first meet someone, our perceptions about a person are generally influenced by a person's looks and behaviour. If we know the person deeper, we tend to pay more attention to his/her strengths and weaknesses. When we think that a person is good in one aspect, it is very likely that we will make a similar evaluation for other aspects of this person. This is what we call the Halo Effect. However, if we consider that a person is bad, all things related to him/her are bad or devil due to the influence of the Devil Effect.

The Halo and the Devil Effect are very common and they can be found everywhere, in the school, in the work place, among friends or even at home.

Examples of such situations include assessment of applicants for jobs, scholarships, or awards; designating job or committee assignments based on perceived capabilities or past performance; and in evaluating academic, job, or athletic performance. The Halo or the Devil Effect can lessen an individual's effort to be objective in making judgments because all people respond to others in different ways, making true objectivity nearly impossible.

Some other findings are even more interesting. In one study in America, the researchers found that applicants with a good appearance in employment interviews were more advantaged than persons with higher job qualifications, even though the interviewers claimed that appearance played a small role in their choices (Mack & Rainey, 1990). Another piece of research examining U.S. and Canadian employment cases found that attractive employees got paid an average of 12-14 percent more than

their unattractive co-workers (Hammermesh & Biddle, 1994).

The primary reason that causes the Halo Effect & the Devil Effect is because we like to classify people whom we don't know very well. We usually make stereotypes, even though we understand that just because one dresses like a pop star does not mean he/she can sing, dance or play the guitar. Despite this knowledge, we always classify people by their appearance.

With this in mind, you can make use of the Halo Effect to work for you. The first impression is very important. If your appearance looks great (clean, tidy, polite, gentle gestures, good manners and proper language), it is natural that people may assume that other aspects of your life are also good. People will normally classify you as an educated and good natured person.

Your overpowering good qualities can and will determine your “unknown” qualities in the eyes of others.

But don't forget that the same is true for your overpowering bad qualities. This is the “devil” effect in action. For example, let's say you meet someone that smells bad. Most people will automatically assume that this person is:

1. Dirty;
2. Unpleasant;
3. Lazy ;
4. Unfriendly;
5. Unreliable...and so on.

So, find out what things you are doing right now that can possibly be causing a Halo or Devil Effect on you. Try very hard to shed those things that cause a Devil Effect, while preserving those good points which promote a Halo Effect.

Are your school uniforms or clothes tidy and clean? How about your attire and grooming: your shoes, haircut and body smell? You should also be very careful choosing your language --- slang, foul and vulgar language will normally make you a gangster in the eyes of someone you first met.

Try to get upgrade yourself by reading and learning. Reading can enrich your language and communication skills. Getting more exercise and working for a healthy body are also important. Good communication skills and a great body provide a solid foundation for confidence. Please remember, confidence comes from success. If you're experiencing success at something that is related to how you look, day-by-day you'll become more confident.

My dear students, to end my sharing this morning, I would like to recommend that all you work hard on the following 3 things. They can improve your quality of life.

1. Knowledge;
2. Health and fitness --- your body and your spirit
3. Healthy lifestyle, network of good friends, and effective communication skills

These are the key elements that for sure will make the Halo Effect work for you.
Thanks for your attention and wishing you an enjoyable day of learning.

Reference:

- (1) http://changingminds.org/explanations/theories/halo_effect.htm
- (2) <http://www.angeleyesdevilsmile.com/blog/the-halo-and-devil-effects/>