The Social Construction of Emotion

> You may often be seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live.
>
> —LORD CHESTERFIELD, *Letters to His Son, 1774*

Imagine the following. Ned has been dating Brenda for 3 months, and it has been a roller-coaster ride for him. Arguments have been followed by intense intimacy, which has been followed by indifference from Brenda and her claims of ambivalence. He has now received a text message from Brenda telling him that the relationship is over and that she wants no further communication from him. Ned is perplexed, since this seems like a callous way to end a relationship, and his first response is one of anger. As he thinks about this more during the day, he begins to feel anxious, and to worry that he will always be alone. He then becomes sad, feeling empty and confused. He also notices moments when he feels better—even relieved that the relationship is over—but then he wonders whether he is just fooling himself and his emotions will soon flood him with misery again. Ned thinks he should have only one feeling, not this entire range of feelings. He cannot understand why his feelings are so strong, since he has been with Brenda for "only" 3 months. He dwells on his negative feelings while sitting alone in his apartment, drinking, and bingeing on junk food. Ned begins to think that if he doesn't get rid of these feelings, he might go insane; he remembers how his aunt had to go to the hospital when he was a kid. Ashamed to tell his friend, Bill, about the depths of his feelings, he isolates himself and does not want to be a burden. "What is wrong with me?" he muses as he pours himself another Scotch. "Will I ever feel better?"

Just a few blocks away in the city, Michael has been going through a similar roller-coaster relationship with Karen, from whom he has just received a text message telling him that the relationship is over. Michael is angry with Karen's insensitivity, and his emotions during the next 2 days run the gamut from anger, sadness, anxiety, loneliness, emptiness, and confusion to moments of relief that the relationship is over. Now Michael is more reflective and more accepting of things in life than Ned is, and he reflects on his emotions: "Well, it makes sense that I would have a lot of different feelings, since the relationship was confusing. In fact, the relationship was all about intense feelings—it *was* a roller-coaster ride. I can only imagine that a lot of other people might feel the same way." He turns to his friend, Juan, who has always had a sympathetic ear, and tells him about the turmoil he is going through. It's a bit intense, this discussion, but Juan and Michael have been through a lot together. As he talks, Juan nods his head in understanding. Limiting himself to a couple of beers, Michael goes home to get some rest. He thinks, "I've been through tough times before. My feelings are intense right now, but I can handle things." He also realizes that the reason he has such strong feelings is that relationships matter to him. He really wants a committed relationship, and he won't give up on that just because this one ended. Emotions are the cost of caring.

What distinguishes our unfortunate "Ned the Neurotic" from "Michael the Mensch" is that Ned has a negative theory of his emotions, whereas Michael accepts and uses his emotions in more constructive ways. These two approaches to the same event reflect what I call "emotional schemas"—that is, individual theories about the nature of emotion and how to regulate them. One person may try to suppress emotions because he or she views them as incomprehensible, overwhelming, endless in duration, and even shameful; another person may accept emotions as temporary, rich in complexity, part of being human, and telling us about our values and needs. The therapeutic model I describe in this book, "emotional schema therapy," focuses on identifying an individual's idiosyncratic theory of the emotions of self and others, examining the consequences of these constructions of emotions, differentiating helpful from unhelpful strategies of emotion regulation, and helping the individual integrate emotional experience into a meaningful life.

Almost everyone has experienced emotions such as sadness, anxiety, or anger, but not everyone develops major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, or panic disorder. What gives rise to the persistence of emotions that then develop into psychological disorders? I emphasize throughout this book that it is not only the experience of emotion that matters, but also the interpretations of those emotions and the strategies one employs to cope with or regulate them. There are pathways from painful emotions to psychopathology, and different pathways from painful emotions to adaptive life strategies. The view advanced here is that one's interpretations and

responses to painful emotions will determine whether psychopathology arises from the experience. For instance, one can experience intense sadness without developing major depressive disorder.

There are numerous theories of emotion, and these vary widely. Emotions have been viewed as innately programmed responses to the evolutionarily relevant environment (Darwin, 1872/1965; Nesse & Ellsworth, 2009; Tooby & Cosmides, 1992); as electrochemical processes that occur in various parts of the brain (Davidson & McEwen, 2012); as the consequences of "irrational" thinking (D. A. Clark & Beck, 2010; Ellis & Harper, 1975); as the results of appraisals of threat or stressors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); as determining the ability to process information (the affect infusion model; Forgas, 1995); as "containing" information about needs and thoughts that are related to those needs (the emotion-focused model; Greenberg, 2002); or as primary—that is, as preceding cognition (Zajonc, 1980). Each of these models—and many others—has contributed greatly to our understanding of the importance of emotion in daily life and the development of psychopathology. The model proposed here, which I refer to alternatively in this book as the "emotional schema model" or as "emotional schema theory," extends our understanding of emotion by proposing that essential aspects of the process of emotion experience include the individual's interpretation and evaluation of emotions, and his or her strategies of emotion control. From this perspective, emotion is not only an experience; it is also an *object* of experience. Although emotions have evolved through evolutionary adaptation and may be universal experiences, one's interpretations, evaluations, and responses are also socially constructed.

Fritz Heider (1958) proposed that individuals maintain beliefs about themselves and others regarding the nature of causes of behavior, intentionality, and the organization of the self. Heider observed that the ordinary person is a "psychologist" in his or her own right, utilizing models of attribution and evaluation, and inferring traits and personal qualities. This "naive psychology" (or common sense), as it was called, became the basis of the field of "social cognition" (which has morphed into "theory of mind"). I describe how "naive psychology" may be extended to a model of how individuals conceptualize emotions in themselves and others, and how these specific models of emotion may lead to problematic strategies of emotion regulation.

Emotional schema theory is a social-cognitive model of emotion and emotion regulation. It proposes that individuals differ in their evaluation of the legitimacy and shame about emotion, their interpretations of the causes of emotion, their need to control emotion, their expectations about the duration and danger of emotion, and their standards regarding the appropriateness of emotion display (Leahy, 2002, 2003b; Leahy, Tirch, & Napolitano, 2011). Even if emotion has a strong biological determination, and even if emotion is related to specific eliciting stimuli, the *experience* of

emotion is often followed by an interpretation of that emotion: "Does my anxiety make sense?", "Would other people feel the same way?", "Will this last indefinitely?", "How can I control this?", or "Will I go insane?" These interpretations of emotion, which I refer to as "theories of emotion," are the central content of "emotional schemas"—that is, beliefs about the emotions of ourselves and others, and how these emotions can be regulated. I refer to emotional schema theory as a social-cognitive model because emotions are both personal and social phenomena that are interpreted by ourselves and others; as such, changes in interpretations (our own and others') will result in changes in emotional intensity and dysregulation.

In this chapter, I briefly review how emotion and rationality have been viewed in the Western philosophical tradition, and how Western ideas about emotions and emotional displays have changed in the last several hundred years, suggesting that the "construction of emotion" has been in continual flux. I also discuss how current models of affective forecasting suggest that "naive" theories of emotion may have an impact on decision making and the current experience of emotion. The argument throughout is that not only our experience of emotion, but also our interpretations of that experience and what we believe it predicts, matter.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EMOTION
IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

Primacy of the Rational

In *The Republic*, Plato uses the metaphor of the charioteer who attempts to control two horses—one that is amenable to direction, and the other that charges off out of control. Plato viewed emotions as impediments to rational and productive thinking and action, and thus as detracting from the pursuit of virtue. Plato (1991) describes the initial impact of events that lead to emotion as "the fluttering of the soul." If we think of the progression of a rational response to events, the first movement may begin with a jolt or "fluttering of the soul." Subsequent movements involve stepping back and observing what is happening, next considering the virtue that is relevant (e.g., "courage"), and then considering the actions and thoughts that might lead one to a virtuous response. As we will see later, the emotional schema model acknowledges that a first response to an emotion may be characterized by a sense of "disruption" or "surprise." This process is also likely to reflect automatic or unconscious processes (Bargh & Morsella, 2008; LeDoux, 2007)—that is, Plato's "fluttering of the soul." However, individuals can also stand back and evaluate what is currently happening, what their options are, how this is related to valued goals, and how their emotions might rise or fall depending on their interpretations and what they do. Aristotle viewed virtue as the character trait and practice that represents

the ideal "mean" between the two extremes of a desired personal quality. In the emotional schema model—as in the model underlying acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2012)—there is the recognition that values (or virtues) can determine how one views emotions and the ability to tolerate discomfort in the context of valued action. The goal is not simply a particular emotion, but rather the meaning, value, or virtue that one wishes to attain.

Aristotle (1984, 1995) emphasized flourishing (*eudaimonia*) to pursue "the good life"—a sense of happiness or well-being that one is acting in accord with virtues and the valued meaning of one's life. Aristotle defined "virtues" as those qualities of character that one admires in another person; that is, the goal is to become the person that you would admire. The emotional experience of "happiness" is the result of daily practice of virtues, such as temperance, courage, patience, modesty, and other qualities. Thus feeling "good" is a consequence of *pursuing* the good and *practicing* the behavior—that is, *virtue*. The emotional schema model draws on Aristotle's view that practicing valued habits or virtues can facilitate greater adaptation and fulfillment.

Stoics, such as Epictetus, Seneca, and Cicero, viewed rationality as superior to emotion and suggested that emotions lead one to overreact and lose sight of important values; they thus detract from virtue and ultimately enslave the individual (Inwood, 2003). The emphasis among the Stoics was on rational conduct, elimination of overattachment to the external world, discipline over one's desires, and freedom from material need and the need for approval. Stoic exercises included practicing hunger, physical discomfort, and poverty to learn that one could survive without material riches; contemplating the elimination of valued objects or persons in one's life to recognize their value; reflecting each day on what one did well and how one could improve; standing back from an emotion and considering the course of rational action; recognizing that thoughts are what make life bad, not reality itself; and beginning each day, as the Emperor Marcus Aurelius did, with the following recognition of the limits of reality and the importance of acceptance while pursuing virtue: "Begin each day by telling yourself: Today I shall be meeting with interference, ingratitude, insolence, disloyalty, ill-will, and selfishness—all of them due to the offenders' ignorance of what is good or evil" (Marcus Aurelius, 2002).

The primacy of cognition gained further support during the European Enlightenment, with a growing emphasis on rational discourse, reason, individual freedom, science, and exploration of the unknown. Locke, Hume, Voltaire, Bentham, Mill (Gay, 2013), and others attempted to free thinking from what they viewed as the limitations of superstition, authority, and emotional appeals. New discoveries in science questioned the authority of Christian doctrine. Kant's emphasis on a rational and virtuous life based on the categorical imperative freed moral reasoning from dictates of the

Church. Locke's contract theory located legitimacy in agreements rather than brute authority. And the exploration of new worlds led to a recognition that cultural norms were possibly arbitrary arrangements rather than eternal truths. However, in contrast to the privileged status of rationality and science, Hume argued that reason is the slave of emotion, since reason cannot tell us what we *want*; it can only tell us how to *get there*. Emotion, in Hume's view, plays a more central role. According to Hume, emotions tell us about what matters, whereas rationality may help us achieve the goals set by emotion.

In the 20th century, the emphasis on rationality, practicality, and the discovery of "facts" rather than faith became central to pragmatism, logical positivism, ordinary-language philosophy, and the general area of analytic philosophy. Gilbert Ryle (1949), in *The Concept of Mind*, rejected the idea that there is a "ghost in the machine"; he criticized the idea that souls, minds, personalities, and other "inferred entities" determined anything. Logical positivists, such as the young Wittgenstein (1922/2001), Ayer (1946), Carnap (1967), and others, proposed that the only criterion of truth is verifiability, that knowledge is derived from experience, and that emotional appeals are misleading and need to be submitted to the test of logical discourse and clear definition. Austin (1975) and Ryle (1949) advanced the idea that philosophy should concentrate on the ordinary use of language to clarify, through logical analysis, the meanings of statements. The emphasis was on clarification, logic, empiricism (in some cases), and—if possible—reduction to mathematical statements of logic. Emotion was viewed as noise.

Primacy of Emotion

Although rationality and logic have always constituted a major influence in philosophy (and in Western culture in general), emotion has always been a counterpart, serving a dialectical function throughout history. Plato's emphasis on logic and rational thought was in contrast to the great tradition of Greek tragedy. Indeed, Euripides's *The Bacchae* (1920) represented the tragic view that if one ignores the god (Dionysius or Bacchus) who gathers followers in song, dance, and a sense of total abandon, then, ironically, one will face complete destruction in madness. One ignores emotion at one's own peril. The emotional schema model suggests that the goal is not "feeling good," but the capacity for feeling *everything*. There is no higher or lower "self" in this model; rather, all emotions are included in the "self." This model argues for the inclusion of emotions—even "disparaged" emotions such as anger, resentment, jealousy, and envy—and for the acceptance of those emotions as part of the complexity of human nature.

The tragic vision recognizes that suffering is inevitable; that the mighty can fall; that forces beyond one's control or even imagination can destroy;

that injustice is often inevitable; and that the suffering of others matters to oneself because it exemplifies what can happen to anyone. All of us are part of the same community of fragile, fallible, and mortal people. In contrast to the tragic vision, Plato privileged rationality as the way to power and control, and tragedy as the great leveler through its appeal to emotion.

In the 19th century, Nietzche (1956) suggested that the great contrast in culture and philosophy was between the Apollonian and the Dionysian— that is, between the emphasis on structure, logic, rationality, and control, and the emphasis on the emotional, the intense, the individual, and the wild expression of total freedom. The latter was reflected in the Romantic movement, which embraced emotion completely—emphasizing emotional intensity, individual experience, heroics, magical thinking, metaphor, myth, the personal and private, revolutionary thinking, nationalism, and intense individual love. Nature was given precedence over the constructed world of the Enlightenment, with an emphasis on natural instincts, the "noble savage," natural landscapes, and freedom from constraint. Logic was viewed as a distraction from the lived experience. Leading Romantic philosophers included Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Rousseau, leading poets included Shelley, Byron, Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats. Romanticism also had a significant influence on music, as represented by Wagner, Beethoven, Schubert, and Berlioz (Pirie, 1994).

One element of the Romantic movement was the 18th-century movement of sentimentalism, which emphasized intensity of individual expression rather than rationality or accepted norms, with intense expression representing authenticity, sincerity, and the strength of one's feelings. Indeed, it was not uncommon for members of the House of Lords in Britain to argue their positions while weeping. Suicide was the ultimate expression of this romantic intensity.

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, existentialism became a major counterforce to British and American rationalist models in philosophy, with existentialists emphasizing the role of individual purpose, choice, recognition of mortality, the arbitrary nature of existence, and emotions. Kierkegaard (1941) described the existential dilemmas of dread, "the sickness unto death," and the crisis of individual choice. Heidegger (1962) proposed that philosophy needed to address the implications of individual "thrownness" into life and history and the individual's dilemma in constructing meaning. And Sartre (1956) argued that individuals must resolve the dilemmas that are a result of their given situation by exercising their freedom. The emotional schema model proposes that individuals struggle with their freedom of choice, often having difficulty with the "given" that is arbitrarily part of their everyday lives, while recognizing that the choices people face often involve dilemmas or tradeoffs that are emotionally difficult. Choice, freedom, regret, and even dread are viewed as essential components of life in this model, and these "realities" cannot be simply eliminated by

cost–benefit analyses, rationalization, or pragmatism. Although rational evaluation is important, every tradeoff involves a cost. And costs are often unpleasant and difficult.

This brief review cannot do justice to the dichotomized view of emotion and rationality in Western culture (and, of course, does not address the importance of these factors in other cultures). As Nussbaum (2001) has suggested each "realm"—the rational and the emotional—has its value, and each informs the other. The emotional schema model recognizes that emotions and rationality are often in a struggle with one another—often in a dialectic tension as to what will influence choice. Yet both are essential.

Cultural and Historical Factors in Emotion

The emerging field in history referred to as "emotionology" traces the changes in how emotions have been viewed in different societies at different historical periods and how emotions are socialized. Indeed, the study of the history of emotion provides considerable evidence about the social construction of emotion—especially which emotions were valued, which were suppressed, and how rules for display of emotions changed. In 1939, Austrian social historian Norbert Elias wrote a monumental study of the emergence of internalization and self-control in Western European society (republished many years later as *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*; Elias, 1939/2000). Elias traced the changes in rules of conduct regarding speech, eating, dress, greetings, sexual conduct, aggressive conduct, and other social forms of behavior from the 13th century to the early 20th century. With the consolidation of power in the hands of the King and the rise of courtly society where knights would live for part of the year in the King's court, rules of self-control became more significant. Elias argued that greater internalization of emotion and behavior ensued. Indeed, the word "courtesy" is derived from the word "court." Loud displays of emotion, confrontation, and sexual behavior were no longer acceptable, as these emotional experiences became increasingly internalized. Moreover, there was an increased emphasis on personal and private affection; the rise of a sense of a private emotional self, through the spread of reading and the use of personal diaries; and a greater sense of shame and guilt. Max Weber (1930), in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* further expanded the idea that internalization of emotion both provided the emotional conditions for capitalism and was a by-product of capitalism. Thus delay of gratification, emphasis on work and productivity, the value of success as a reflection of individual merit, coordination with market forces, and the seller–buyer relationship all led to greater control of emotion. All of these developments reflected the social construction of emotion.

We can see the further development of emotional control in the North American Puritan culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, with an emphasis on control of anger and passion, denial of worldly pleasure, emphasis on modesty, and greater emphasis on both shame and guilt. The 18th and 19th centuries in America and Britain also saw the rise of "conduct books," which attempted to instruct the reader on proper behavior. During this time, especially in America, there was greater emphasis on the idea of the "self-made man," along with the rise of commerce; the decline of the aristocracy; and the emergence of a new class of tradespeople, entrepreneurs, businesspeople, and professionals. Presumably, a man was not limited by his class status and could rise in the social class system if he mastered the right conduct. Women, on the other hand, would need to rely on opportunistic marriages to advance their status. Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1759/1914) provided daily advice to readers on delay of gratification, the importance of savings, the benefits of hard work, and the importance of reputation. It was Franklin who coined an early version of the phrase "No pain, no gain," in proposing that everyone should exercise 45 minutes each day.

A future American president, John Adams, who aspired to rise in the social class hierarchy of the 18th-century colonies, would stand in front of a mirror observing his facial expression and posture, attempting to control his expression so as not to show any unnecessary emotion. Control over one's face, one's body, one's hand movements, and the intonation of one's voice was all part of the new emphasis on self-control. Perhaps the most influential book advocating self-control was the British aristocrat Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to My Son* (1774/2008), which urged readers to do the following: "Maintain a sense of reserve," "Don't show your true feelings," "Frequent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners," "Be wiser than other people, if you can, but do not tell them so." Other books advised women to hide their sexuality and true feelings behind a veneer of courteous indifference, with an emphasis on modesty. The standard was to be friendly but not flirtatious, and not to show too much interest in a man. Women had to control men's passions. Blushing was approved of for women because it showed embarrassment about any sexual or flirtatious content. Again, the emphasis was on the control of body, face, and verbal expression. Increasingly, in the 18th and 19th centuries the emphasis was that one should not show any intensity of emotion, and should certainly not rely on emotion.

Christopher Lasch, in *Haven in a Heartless World* (1977), describes the rise of a domestic, home-centered venue for emotional intimacy during the Victorian period and after. Emotions went behind closed doors, where domestic "harmony" was emphasized. The Victorian period also saw the rise of the "gendering of emotion"—that is, sex-typing of emotion.

Men occupied the "public" sphere of commerce, while women were now confined to the "private" sphere of the home. Thus, in the public sphere, men were allowed to be competitive, conflicted, and ambitious, whereas at home both men and women would focus on affection, trust, and intimacy. There was greater emphasis on love between spouses, "mother love," and family harmony (anger was not tolerated); jealousy was condemned, since it disrupted the harmony of family life. In this divided world, anger was not seen as appropriate for home life, but was viewed as appropriate for men to direct outward to motivate them. In the socialization of children in the 19th century, it was viewed as appropriate to be afraid—but boys were told to use courage to overcome fear. Courage was not expected for girls. There was also an increased emphasis on guilt rather than shame.

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, emotional norms changed further. With the decline of infant mortality, parents could hope that their infants would live until adulthood; this led to decreased birth rates. An individual infant could get more attention and thereby foster a stronger parental bond of love. Thee was also a greater emphasis on childhood as a distinct stage of life, with clothes especially designed for children, a new emphasis on protection of their welfare, and expectations that children were not simply little adults (Ariès, 1962; Kessen, 1965). In addition, the rise of the commercial economy—especially the increasing emphasis on services and trade—meant that emotional expression needed to adapt to shifting buyer–seller relations (Sennett, 1996). Finally, in the 20th century, with the emergence of gender equality, sexist views of women as hysterical, weaker, or more emotional and less rational were increasingly regarded as outmoded, even though they persisted in early psychoanalytic theory (Deutsch, 1944–1945).

Between the 1920s and the 1950s there emerged new theories of emotion socialization, influenced both by Watson's (1919) research showing that fears are learned, and by the psychoanalytic argument tracing neurosis to childhood difficulties. A popular interpretation of Watson's behaviorism was that avoidance is the best strategy for dealing with fear. There was no longer an emphasis on using courage to face hardship or fear; there was a reduced emphasis on tolerating difficult feelings; and there was more emphasis on what might be characterized as an expressive and reassurance culture. The influence of psychoanalytic theory led to the emphasis on a "safe," reassuring environment, as exemplified in the popular writings of pediatrician Benjamin Spock, with his exhortations on reassurance, expression, coddling, and overprotection as ways to handle a child's fears (e.g., Spock, 1957). As emotions became feared experiences and the goal was to protect a child from experiencing difficulty, there was also the rise of "coolness" in popular culture—that is, the emphasis on being self-contained, in control of emotion, unsentimental, or even aloof and unreachable (Stearns,

1994). Popular cartoon heroes showed no fear (they were "cool"); they did not have to overcome fear or face fear. Characters like Superman appeared so invulnerable that they did not have to show courage.

Of course there was a counterpart to all this internalization, self-control, and muted expression of emotion, as reflected in counterculture mores of self-expression, spontaneity, intensity of individual experience, and sexual freedom. More rebellious elements of popular culture emerged: the popularity of jazz from the 1920s onward; the age of Prohibition with a wide underground of lawbreakers; the 1950s beatniks; the rise of rock and roll; the 1960s hippies; the protest music of the Vietnam era; the "turn on and tune out" message of the drug culture advocated by Timothy Leary and others; and the eventual emergence of "gangsta' rap" and other intense individual expressions that appeared to celebrate complete emotionality and the rejection of self-control.

Thus emotion has been repeatedly constructed and deconstructed in Western culture over the past 3,000 years. The history of emotions reflects this growing awareness of how emotions are viewed, how socialization and norms influence emotional expression, and how some emotions fall out of favor (such as jealousy). All these shifts suggest that emotions are largely products of *social construction*. The history of emotion and the philosophical schools that privilege emotion or rationality all suggest that emotions are not simply innate, spontaneous, universal phenomena (although certainly there is a universal predisposition toward them), but that the evaluation of emotion and rules for emotion display vary considerably within our culture and across cultures.

This brief overview suggests that interpretations or cognitive appraisals of emotion—and the influence of emotions on thinking—are important psychological phenomena in their own right. I now turn to a brief description of current approaches in social psychology that describe common biases in the "naive psychology" of emotion. These approaches reflect the interface between social cognition and the interpretation and prediction of emotion.

COGNITIVE APPRAISALS OF EMOTIONS

Consider the examples at the beginning of this chapter: two men, each going through a breakup in a relationship. The sadder of the two may feel sad and lonely at the present time, and, when asked how he anticipates he will feel in a few months, may predict that he will continue to be sad— perhaps even sadder than he is now. This is an example of "affective forecasting," which refers to predicting that an emotion will be more extremely negative or positive than it turns out to be (Wilson & Gilbert, 2003).

Research on affective forecasting suggests a number of biases or heuristics that lead to overpredicting emotional responses. One such factor is "focalism"—that is, the tendency to focus on a single feature of the event, rather than to consider other possible features that could reasonably mitigate one's emotional response to the event (Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2006; Wilson, Wheatley, Meyers, Gilbert, & Axsom, 2000). For example, some individuals may believe that if they move from a cold and overcast environment like Minnesota to sunny California, they will feel immensely happy for many years. However, they discover that after a brief period of feeling better, their happiness returns to the same level that they experienced in Minnesota. This is because they are focused on one factor (sunshine) while ignoring other important factors, such as their primary relationships and their work environments.

Another central feature of affective forecasting is "impact bias," which refers to the tendency to overestimate the emotional effects of events (Gilbert, Driver-Linn, & Wilson, 2002). That is, one may predict that a positive event will lead to lasting positive affect, while a negative event will lead to lasting negative affect. For example, an individual may predict that a breakup in a relationship will lead to everlasting negative feelings, but may believe that the beginning of a relationship will lead to feeling wonderful indefinitely. One dimension of predicting an emotion is how long it will last—the "durability effect." Wilson and Gilbert (2003) have since subsumed durability effect under impact bias. The durability effect reflects the belief that an emotion will continue for a long time.

Another factor affecting affective forecasting is "immune neglect"—that is, the tendency to ignore one's ability to cope with negative events. For example, Gilbert and colleagues (2002) found that participants would overpredict the duration of negative affect following six hypothetical situations: the breakup of a romantic relationship, the failure to achieve tenure, an electoral defeat, negative personality feedback, an account of a child's death, and rejection by a prospective employer. According to Wilson and Gilbert (2005), such individuals often ignore or underestimate their ability to cope; they do not recognize the powerful effects of coping strategies such as "dissonance reduction, motivated reasoning, self-serving attributions, self-affirmation, and positive illusions," which mitigate the effects of "negative life events" (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998, p. 619). For example, after a breakup with a girlfriend, a man may reduce the negative impact of the event by claiming he is better off without her (dissonance reduction), come up with negative attributions about the former partner (motivated reasoning), view himself as highly desirable now that he is single (self-serving attributions), bolster his hope by convincing himself and others that the best lies ahead (self-affirmation), and predict that his work and love life can only get better (positive illusions). Although

one can argue that in each case these adjustments entail cognitive distortions or rationalizations, they may also mitigate the negative effects of the breakup. Moreover, unforeseen positive events may also occur, and these can also lead to a more positive outcome.

Moreover, individuals are prone to overvaluing a loss versus valuing a gain—a phenomenon known as "loss aversion" (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). A common adage, "We suffer our losses more than we enjoy our gains," has support in the empirical literature. In a study of responses to gambling wins and losses, individuals overpredicted negative affect following a loss, not realizing that they would be able to rationalize their losses and that they were not as likely as they anticipated to dwell on these losses; that is, these people actually coped better with gambling losses than they anticipated they would (Kermer, Driver-Linn, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2006). As a result of loss aversion, individuals may often get stuck with an unpleasant situation, overestimating how bad they will feel if they ultimately regret giving it up.

Another factor in emotion prediction is the "affect heuristic"—a form of "emotional reasoning"—in which one uses a current emotion to predict a future emotion (i.e., uses the current emotion as an anchor) or predicts future emotional responses based on how one feels at the current moment (Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson, 2000). The affect heuristic helps account for greater risk taking for behaviors that "feel good." For example, if unprotected sex feels good, then it is viewed as less risky (Slovic, 2000; Slovic, Finucane, Peters, & MacGregor, 2004). It can also account for assessing the value or safety of things based on how one feels (e.g., "I know it's dangerous because I feel anxious").

In addition, individuals often estimate their future emotional responses based on their current appraisals of uncertainty; that is, the more uncertainty they feel, the greater the negativity anticipated (Bar-Anan, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2009). Intolerance of uncertainty is a key factor underlying worry, rumination, and obsessive–compulsive disorder (OCD), suggesting that uncertainty about negative outcomes may be a heuristic underpinning emotional schemas. For example, not knowing "for sure" how one will feel, when one is feeling poorly at the present time, may augment predictions of negative affect later.

Finally, many individuals discount the value of an alternative over time, such that they prefer a smaller gain now to a larger gain later. "Time discounting" refers to an emphasis on present events or availability of rewards, while reducing the value of delayed gratification (Frederick, Loewenstein, & O'Donoghue, 2002; McClure, Ericson, Laibson, Loewenstein, & Cohen, 2007; Read & Read, 2004). This bias toward the present may contribute to demands for immediate gratification, intolerance of discomfort, difficulty in persisting on difficult tasks, and demoralization

about reaching goals (O'Donoghue & Rabin, 1999; Thaler & Shefrin, 1981; Zauberman, 2003). In its extreme form, decisions about emotion regulation may be myopic; that is, one may be so entirely focused on immediately reducing an uncomfortable emotion that one chooses (ultimately) self-defeating alternatives, such as substance misuse or binge eating. Future rewards are discounted to such an extent that the only valued alternative may seem like the one that is most immediate. One manifestation of myopic time discounting is the "contingency trap," where an individual gets locked into immediate contingencies, thereby developing an ultimately self-defeating habit. The model of contingency traps has been applied to addictive behavior: Withdrawal leads to immediate pain, whereas the use of the substance leads to immediate gratification, resulting in a greater momentum toward more substance use and a willingness to pay higher prices as one adjusts to higher levels of the substance (Becker, 1976, 1991; Grossman, Chaloupka, & Sirtalan, 1998).

Cognitive appraisals and heuristics such as these are essential components of emotional schemas. They contribute to the beliefs that emotions are durable, are out of control, and need to be eliminated or suppressed immediately. Ironically, emotions appear to have an evanescence: They often quickly fade rather than endure, lasting a short period until another emotion appears (Wilson, Gilbert, & Centerbar, 2003). Predictions about how long one will be miserable after a breakup, loss of a job, physical injury, or conflict with a good friend tend to overestimate how extreme one's emotions will be. Similar data suggest that happiness or unhappiness is not durable after significant life events. Indeed, the research on resilience suggests that an overwhelming percentage of individuals have returned to their pre-event baseline 1 year after major negative life events, suggesting that emotional "injuries" are resolved through various processes of coping (Bonanno & Gupta, 2009). Furthermore, individuals differ in the capacity to recover from trauma or loss, partly as a result of "regulatory flexibility"—that is, the ability to recruit adaptive processes to cope with difficulties that arise (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). This suggests that coping processes may be more important than the momentary experience of painful emotion.

Emotional schema therapy attempts to expand the range of regulatory flexibility, so that the occurrence of emotion need not result in extreme affective forecasting or self-defeating emotion regulation strategies, but rather can become the opportunity to recruit a wide range of adaptive interpretations and strategies for coping. Emotional schema therapy highlights problematic theories about a current emotion and shows how these are related to unhelpful coping styles that perpetuate further dysfunction. The chapters to come examine a variety of techniques to address a number of these beliefs about emotion, and suggest more helpful strategies for coping with emotions that appear troubling.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

This chapter has shown how evolutionary theory, social construction, and historical and cultural contexts can influence the beliefs, strategies, and acceptability of various emotions. The next two chapters describe the core considerations in conducting emotional schema therapy (Chapter 2) and the general model of emotional schemas (Chapter 3). Part II (Chapters 4 and 5) reviews initial assessment and socialization to the model. Part III reviews specific emotional schemas and how to address them. Chapter 6 describes problematic beliefs about validation, their origin, and ways to address these beliefs in therapy. Chapter 7 reviews strategies for modifying several types of specific emotional schemas: those involving the dimensions of comprehensibility, duration, control, guilt/shame, and acceptance. Chapter 8 discusses the inevitability of ambivalence, examining how emotional perfectionism and intolerance of uncertainty make it difficult for some individuals to live with mixed feelings. Chapter 9, the final chapter of Part III, examines how the emotional schema model links uncomfortable emotions to the values and virtues that can help individuals tolerate the necessary challenges of a meaningful life. In Part IV of the book, "Social Emotions and Relationships," I have focused a chapter on jealousy (Chapter 10) and one on envy (Chapter 11), since these emotions can become so problematic that people kill themselves or others over them. I could have discussed a wide range of other emotions (such as humiliation, guilt, resentment, or anger), but jealousy and envy often include these other emotions—and, due to their social nature and putative evolutionary and cultural relevance, they appear most appropriate for this model. The last two chapters (12 and 13) review how emotional schemas can be relevant to couple relationships and to the therapeutic relationship, respectively.

SUMMARY

Emotion and emotion regulation have gained increasing importance in psychology in the past decade with advances in neuroscience of emotion, cognitive models, dialectical behavior therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, emotion-focused therapy, mentalization therapy, and other approaches ranging from cognitive behavioral therapy to psychodynamic therapy. In this chapter, I have introduced the idea that a component of the unfolding process of experiencing an emotion is the interpretation and evaluation of that emotion, along with the use of helpful or unhelpful strategies of emotion regulation. I refer to these concepts and processes as "emotional schemas." In Western philosophical and cultural traditions, there has been a continued dichotomization of emotion and rationality—with some arguing that emotion interferes with deliberative, rational, and virtuous action,

and others viewing emotion as a source of meaning and interpersonal connection. Over the past several hundred years, Western concepts and recommended strategies for coping with emotion have changed substantially, with some emotions, such as jealousy and courage, losing "status." Finally, I have introduced the idea that the social psychology of emotion and choice can help illuminate some of the sources of bias in interpretations of emotion and prediction of future emotion. The remainder of this book examines how individual differences in emotional schemas may account for psychopathology, avoidance, noncompliance, and other problematic behaviors, and how assisting individuals in understanding and modifying these emotional schemas can deepen their experience of therapy and move them to confronting the difficult experiences required for growth. In the next chapter, I outline some of the main tenets of emotional schema therapy.