What is Ostracism?

- To ignore and exclude
  - aka: To shun, exile, ‘send to Coventry,’ freeze out, silent treatment, cold shoulder, ‘Meidung.’ wie Luft behandeln (to look at as air),
  - doodzwijgen (silence someone to death)
Ostracism is Ubiquitous

- **Used by:**
  - **Animals** - lions, wolves, primates, buffalo, coyotes, bees
  - **Children** - playgrounds, friends
  - **Governments** - banishment
  - **Tribes** - social death
  - **Institutions** - religious (excommunication), military (silencing), educational (time-out), prisons (solitary confinement).
  - **Dyads** - the silent treatment

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Personal Accounts

“In high school, the other students thought me weird and never spoke to me. I tell you in all honesty that at one stage they refused to speak to me for 153 days, not one word at all... That was a very low point for me in my life and on the 153rd day, I swallowed 29 Valium pills.”

- The Story of Jennifer germs
Relational Ostracism: Partners

“I’m 40 years old and my father hasn’t talked to me for the last 6 months. Recently, he was in hospital and I was told he might die. I decided I had to go see him, even if he wasn’t talking to me. I walked up to him and held his hand and said “Oh Daddy, please don’t leave me” He looked at me, his eyes welled up with tears, then turned his head away from me. He still wouldn’t talk to me...his death would be the final silence.”

Ostracism Has Adaptive Benefits

- In animal kingdom, who is ostracized?
  - Burdensome members are ostracized

- Why?
  - **Strengthens** the group
    - Corrects undesirable behavior of deviate, or
    - Removes the deviate from the group

- While ostracism evolved, detecting ostracism quickly may have co-evolved.
How frequently are we ostracized?

- Survey of representative sample of US adults indicated that ~70% are given the silent treatment by our loved ones, and about 67% admit to giving it to their loved ones.

- 2 week event contingent diary study
  - Participants reported on average one episode a day.
  - Ostracism episodes resulted in (compared to how they felt prior to the episode) lower levels of belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence
  - Increased anger, increased sadness.
  - Strong effect with strangers, but even stronger if in a closer relationship

Faulkner, Williams, Sherman, Williams, 1995
Nezlek, Williams, & Wheeler, 2010

Reactions to Passersby Who Don’t Acknowledge you

![Bar chart showing reactions to passersby who don't acknowledge you by gender and type of interaction. The chart indicates that males and females have different levels of disconnectedness in various scenarios.](chart.png)
Exposure to Ostracism

Reflexive Response: 
*Pain*

Threats to:
- Belonging
- Self-Esteem
- Control
- Meaningful Existence

Anger
Sadness

Reflective Response
Appraisal and Coping
(Influenced by context and individual differences)

Need Fortification

Responses that are affiliative & socially susceptible

Responses that Assert Control, are Aggressive, and demand Recognition

Paradigm Developed From “the Field”
Ball Tossing

Virtual Ball Toss Paradigm

- Cyberball
- Minimal ostracism paradigm
  - They don’t see you; you don’t see them.
  - You know nothing about them; they know nothing about you.
  - You never met them; you don’t expect to meet them.
Cyberball

Inclusion

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF OSTRACISM EXPERIENCE: WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?
"If no one turned round when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met ‘cut us dead,’ and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruelest bodily tortures would be a relief; for these would make us feel that, however bad might be our plight, we had not sunk to such a depth as to be unworthy of attention at all." (James, 1890/1950, p. 293-294).

Dial A Feeling

Turn this way for NEGATIVE

Turn this way for POSITIVE

Wednesday, June 8, 2011
How soon does it hurt?

Nonverbal Reactions Over the Course of Cyberball Ostracism
AFTER FMRI INTERVIEWS - BBC

PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CLOSENESS

Aron’s Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) modified for a three person assessment
IOS Measure

Following Inclusion
Self-expansion

Following Ostracism
Self-contraction?
Feeling Out-Of-The-Loop

- A form of partial ostracism, in which individual is recognized as existing, included and responded to in many domains, but is left out of an “information loop.”
- Common among colleagues and coworkers.
- Loop can be work related or social
- Is a little bit of inclusion sufficient to buffer being out-of-the-loop, or does it only take one instance of ostracism to threaten needs?

Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, GPIR, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In the Loop</th>
<th>Out of the Loop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of Needs</td>
<td>5.09 (.04)</td>
<td>3.47 (1.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>4.93 (.10)</td>
<td>3.88 (1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>1.26 (.81)</td>
<td>1.65 (.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>1.32 (.75)</td>
<td>1.76 (.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>3.11 (.88)</td>
<td>2.71 (.92)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jones, Carter-Sowell, Kelly, & Williams, GPIR, 2009
IMPACT ON SELF-ESTEEM

- Measured in Study 1 explicit self-esteem
- In Study 2, implicit self-esteem using self-other / good-bad IAT
- Manipulated ostracism with imagined conversation with a face on screen
  - Direct gaze (with natural blinking)
  - Averted gaze (to left and right, rarely at person)

Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg, & Williams, PSPB, in press

USING EYEGAZE TO MANIPULATE OSTRACISM

Wirth, Sacco, Hugenberg, & Williams, PSPB, in press
Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean direct eye gaze</th>
<th>Mean averted eye gaze</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Cohen's d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluded</td>
<td>1.77 (1.11)</td>
<td>2.81 (1.49)</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignored</td>
<td>2.06 (1.31)</td>
<td>3.16 (1.55)</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic need satisfaction</td>
<td>3.10 (.61)</td>
<td>2.66 (.64)</td>
<td>-4.06</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>3.02 (.77)</td>
<td>2.62 (.71)</td>
<td>-3.10</td>
<td>p = .002</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.73 (.86)</td>
<td>2.24 (.76)</td>
<td>-3.47</td>
<td>p = .001</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>3.18 (.75)</td>
<td>2.88 (.74)</td>
<td>-2.36</td>
<td>p = .02</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful existence</td>
<td>3.49 (.69)</td>
<td>2.92 (.86)</td>
<td>-4.20</td>
<td>p &lt; .001</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>1.97 (.94)</td>
<td>2.31 (.86)</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>p = .03</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive behavior</td>
<td>1.65 (1.02)</td>
<td>2.11 (1.29)</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>p = .03</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational evaluation</td>
<td>2.70 (1.44)</td>
<td>1.98 (1.14)</td>
<td>-3.21</td>
<td>p = .002</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, in press, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin

Implicit measure of self-esteem

Results

Difference between incongruent trials - congruent trials

Quicker to associate “SELF” words with “NEGATIVE” words after being ostracized

**t(27) = -2.29, p = .03, d = .85**

With, Sacco, Hugenberg & Williams, in press, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
Meaning of Life

- Ostracized/Included solely or with another by 2 or 3 sources
- Measured usual DVs and participants’ views on the meaning of their lives.
- “The likelihood that I shall be remembered by no one in two hundred years makes my current life seem unimportant.”
- There is no sense in feeling hopeful about the future because, in the end, death robs life of all

Following 2-min of Cyberball

Endorsing Outlook of Meaningless Life
17 items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)

- Inclusion
- Ostracism

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Alone and Without Purpose

- Stillman, Baumeister, Lambert, Crescioni, DeWall, & Fincham (*JESP*, 2009)
- 4 studies showing that social exclusion reduce global perception that life is meaningful.
- Study 1: confederate refuses to work with S
- Study 2: Cyberball
- Studies 3 & 4: Self-reported loneliness. Mediated by purpose, value, and positive self-worth.

Being Forgotten

*(King & Geise, 2011)*

- **Study 1**
  - N=96 females who had completed lab session two days prior
    - Remembered (“Oh I remember you”)
    - Forgotten (“Huh, I don’t remember you. Were here on Monday?”) → lower meaning of life, less positive affect, or self-esteem
    - Complimented (“Hey, those are nice shoes”)
    - Control Group (confirmed name was on list)
- **Study 2**
  - N=47 who had completed a group exercise two days earlier were informed online that
    - “no one remembered you” → lower meaning in life than being remembered; no mood or self-esteem effects
    - “everyone remembered you”
    - “no one chose you as someone they would want to work with” → lower meaning of life
Impact on Self

• Even a brief episode of ostracism, with minimal implications, results in
  • negative affect (emotions): sad, angry
  • negative self construals
    • relationally apart and distant
    • lower self-esteem, explicit and implicit
    • less competent/control
    • unworthy of attention; life is less meaningful
  • Puts ostracized individual at risk emotionally, cognitively, and motivationally
  • Heightens susceptibility to social influence or, with sufficient control thwart, to regain attention and control, possibly through aggression/violence.

Stage 1: Reflexive Responses

• The reflexive reaction to ostracism is distress and pain, regardless of:
  – The target’s personality,
  – The target’s attributions, or
  – The social/situational context
Reflexive Reactions to Ostracism: Unmitigated Pain, Distress, and Need Threat

Self Esteem and Ostracism?

![Graph showing the relationship between self-esteem and quantity of ostracism.](image)

Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000

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Source of Ostracism Does Not Matter

Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, JESP, 2004

The KKK Won’t Let Me Play

Gonsalkorale & Williams, EJSP, 2007

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Ostracism Hurts Even When Inclusion is Costly

Gain

Loss

€yberball

Hi Need Satisfaction

Low Need Satisfaction

Pain, even when it does not violate expectancy

Anterior Cingulate

Right Ventral Prefrontal

Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, Science, 2003; see also Kross et al., PNAS, 2011 - secondary somatosensory cortex; dorsal posterior insula

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I feel your pain: Observing Others Playing Cyberball

Ostracism Embodied As Cold

An “icy stare;” “Cold shoulder” Just metaphors?
- “Cold and Lonely” (Zhong & Leonardelli, Psych Science, 2008)
  - Study 1: Recalling rejection decreases estimate of room temperature
  - Study 2: Cyberball ostracism causes preference for hot (rather than cold) drink
  - Process hypothesized to be metaphor-induced associations
- Actual peripheral body temperature decreases (IJzerman, Gallucci, Pouw, Vetrova, Weijgerber, van Doesum, & Williams, under review)
  - Study 1: Ostracism decreases temperature in body extremities (fingers)
  - Study 2: If given something warm to hold, distress is reduced/eliminated.
Reflective Effects

- After pain and thwarting of needs, ostracized individuals reflect and appraise episode, its meaning, and then cope.
- Coping involves fortifying need(s) most thwarted.
- Coping moderated by individual and situational differences.

Social Anxiety Moderates Reflective Responses

- Normal and highly socially anxious individuals played Cyberball, either included or ostracized.
- Need levels measured immediately and 45-minutes later.
- Normals returned to high need levels after 45-min.
- Socially anxious participants did not bounce back to pre-ostracized levels, even 45-min later.

Zadro, Boland, & Richardson, (2006, JESP).
Social Anxiety and Self-Regulation Following Ostracism

- Social anxiety implies a chronic lack of social efficacy.
- Recovery from an episode of ostracism should be more difficult.
- Leads to the inability to exert self-control
  - Resisting the temptation to eat unhealthy food (Study 1), or
  - Willingness to drink unpalatable healthy drink (Study 2).

Reflective Stage: Fortifying Belonging and Self-esteem

- Ostracism increases attempts to engage in behaviors that will re-establish the individual's acceptance into the group, including social susceptibility to implied or explicit social demands.
- Ostracized individuals:
  - Attend more to social information (Gardner, Pickett, & Brewer, 2000; Pickett, et al, 2004)
  - Can accurately distinguish duchenne smiles (Bornstein et al, in press)
  - Work harder on collective task than on coactive task (Williams & Sommer, 1997)
  - Conform more (Williams, Cheung, & Choi, 2000)
  - Like new welcoming groups, even unusual ones...(cults?) (Wheaton, 2001; Zadro et al)
  - Mimic a good organizational citizen (Ouwerkerk et al, 2003)
  - Nonconsciously mimic, especially with ingroup members (Lakin & Chartrand, 2005).
  - Comply more (Carter-Sowell & Williams, 2005)
  - Seek approval more (Maner et al, 2007)
  - Spot smiling faces faster and attended to them longer (DeWall et al, 2009)
  - Correct their behaviors - 'time-out' (Nida et al, 2007)
A SOCIAL SHOCK?
Reminiscent of Ivar Lovaas

"Malloy didn't speak to them as they went by the boiler. They drew into themselves and no one could foresee how they would come out of the cloud. For there are two possible reactions to social ostracism — either a man emerges determined to be better, purer, and kindlier or he goes bad, challenges the world and does even worse things."

John Steinbeck, Cannery Row (1945)
Reflective Stage: Fortifying Control and Meaningfulness/Recognition

- Causes self-defeating behavior (Oikawa, Kumagai, & Ohbuchi, 2004)
- Decreases pro-social behaviors (Twenge, et al, 2006)
- Increases anti-social behaviors (Twenge, et al, 2001)
- Generalized aggression against similar group members to those who did ostracism - mass violence (Gaertner & Iuzzini, 2005).
- Leads to outgroup derogation, ingroup elevation, and endorsement of radical/violent fundamentalist options (Schaafsma & Williams, 2009)

Thwarted Control I: Ostracism and Control Deprivation Leads to Aggression

Warburton, Williams, & Cairns, JESP, 2006

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