APPROVAL/DISAPPROVAL IN PREJUDGMENT

ON FIRST MEETING PEOPLE, WE TEND TO MAKE JUDGMENTS ABOUT THEM IN TERMS SUCH AS:

- INTELLIGENT or **STUPID**

- STRONG or **WEAK**

- WARM or **COLD**

- ACTIVE or **PASSIVE**

- **HARD-WORKING** or **LAZY**

- **TRUSTWORTHY** or **UNTRUSTWORTHY**

- **KNOWLEDGEABLE** or **UNINFORMED**

- **FRIENDLY** or **ALOOF**

- **ATTRACTIVE** or **UGLY**

THIS CAN LEAD TO A "BOTTOM LINE" ASSESSMENT OF:

GOOD or BAD

Exercise: Rate a person you like and a person you don't like in the terms of the 9 pairs of opposite traits on the 2 slides. To make the scale complete, add any other trait pairs that you frequently use in making judgments. When you finish the scales for each person, make an overall evaluation of the "Bottom Line" of Good or Bad.

Those scales reflect the kind of judgments you make daily. Although they are highly intuitive, such evaluations largely determine how you interpret the messages that come from others.

In the Exercise, did you find that certain traits went together? For instance, did you rate a person as Good, Warm, and Friendly? OR Bad, Passive, & Weak?

Research suggests that Warmth & Friendliness are traits that are perceived as being closely allied with Goodness. Do you think that the clustering of certain traits is reflective of the people you evaluated? OR is this clustering more a function of your expectation that these traits occur together?

For each individual, list his/her traits. Examine the traits of the people you LIKE. Are certain traits repeated 2 or more times? Examine the traits of the people you DON'T LIKE. Do certain traits appear 2 or more times? Do you find yourself using the same scales of opposite traits pairs for people you like and don't like?

For example, do you often rate people on the Warm/Cold or Knowledgeable/Uninformed scales?

You may discover that you use certain trait scales repeatedly in evaluating people. Remember that how you evaluate others will be largely determined by the specific trait scales you habitually use.

WHY DO CERTAIN TRAITS REOCCUR AGAIN AND AGAIN IN OUR EVALUATION OF OTHERS?

PERSONALITY THEORIST, HARRY STACK SULLIVAN, HAS SUGGESTED THAT FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE THE INDIVIDUAL BECOMES ATTUNDED TO THOSE THINGS HE OR SHE DOES THAT EITEHR RESULT IN APPROVAL & SATISFACTION or RESULT IN DISAPPROVAL & DISSATISFACTION.

A favorite saying of Sullivan's was: "As you judge yourself, so shall you judge others."

PERCEPTION EXERCISE

FILL IN THE BLANKS FOR 5 PEOPLE:

"**When I think of_____, I become aware of the part of me that notices _____(behavior or trait).**"

(Note for each person that the behavior or trait you notice is only one of many ways he/she could be described. Your awareness of each particular trait is based on how strongly significant it is to you).

- "All_____are lazy."

- "No one ever does_____."

- "Only_____people can be effective managers/supervisors/NCOs."

- "The only way to motivate soldiers is to_____."

PARATAXIC DISTORTION

THE PERSON IN FRONT OF YOU IS REMINDING YOU OF SOMEONE ELSE

RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT IF YOU FEEL THAT THE PERSON IN YOUR HISTORY IS SIMILAR TO THE PERSON WITH YOU IN THE PRESENT, NO AMOUNT OF REALITY TESTING WITH CURRENT CONTRADICTORY INFORMATION IS LIKELY TO CHANGE YOUR FEELINGS & ATTITUDES FOR THE PRESENT PERSON.

- **WHENEVER YOU HAVE A STRONG, IMMEDIATE ATTRACTION <u>TO</u> or REVULSION <u>FOR</u> SOMEONE**

- **WHENEVER YOU FIND YOURSELF MAKING ASSUMPTIONS**

THINK ABOUT THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN

THE PERSON IN FRONT OF YOU

AND PEOPLE OUT OF YOUR PAST.

STEPS TO REDUCE THE ILLUSIONS OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

- KEEP COMMUNICATION LINES CLEAR

- NEVER ASSUME THAT YOU KNOW WHAT THE OTHER PERSON IS THINKING/FEELING; CHECK IT OUT FIRST IN "PLAIN LANGUAGE"

- MAINTAIN A HEALTHY SKEPTICISM ABOUT YOUR ASSUMPTIONS; TEST WITH A "REALITY CHECK"