

# Perspectives on the Self

- Does the self exist?
  - Yes, though the concept of self is a relatively new way of regarding people and their relationship to society.
- The self is seen by both Western and Eastern cultures as being divided into the:
  - Inner, more private, self
  - Outer, more public, self
- Expressions of independent self are more popular in Western cultures.
- Expressions of interdependent self are more common in Eastern cultures.

# Self-Concept

**The **Self-Concept** Refers to the Beliefs a Person Holds About His or Her Attributes, and How He or She Evaluates These Qualities.**

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**Components of the Self-Concept Include:**



**Content**

**Positivity  
or Negativity**

**Intensity,  
Stability Over Time  
and Accuracy**

# Self-Concept

## **Self-Esteem**

***Refers to the Positivity of a Person's Self-Concept***

## **Real and Ideal Selves**

***Ideal - How a Person Would Like to Be***

***Real - Realistic Appraisal of Who We Really Are***

## **Fantasy: Bridging the Gap Between the Selves**

***When the Gap Between the Real and Ideal Self is Large,  
Those Consumers are Good Targets for Fantasy Appeals***

# Multiple Selves

- The self has different components, or **Role Identities**, that are active at specific times.
  - They cause us to prefer different products and services.
  - Some of the identities are more central than others (i.e. husband, boss, student).
  - Other identities may be more dominant in certain situations (i.e. stamp collector, dancer, volunteer).
- **Symbolic Interactionism** stresses that relationships with other people play a large part in forming the self.
  - Looking-Glass Self: Process of imagining the reactions of others toward us (self fulfilling prophecy).

# Products That Shape the Self: You Are What You Consume

- People use an individual's consumption behaviors to make judgments about that person's social identity:
  - Clothing, grooming habits
  - Leisure activities,
  - Food preferences,
  - Cars.
- **Symbolic Self-Completion Theory** predicts that people who have an incomplete self-definition tend to complete this identify by acquiring and displaying symbols associated with it.

# Consumption and Self-Concept

## – Loss of Self

- Contribution of possessions to self-identity is most apparent when these treasured objects are lost or stolen.

## – Self-Image Congruence Models predict that products will be chosen when their attributes match some aspect of the self.

- Ideal-self : more relevant for highly expressive social products.
- Actual-self: more relevant for everyday, functional products.

# The Extended Self

**Those External Objects That We Consider a Part of Us Comprise the **Extended Self**.**

**There Are Four Levels of the Extended Self:**

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*Individual Level*  
**Personal Possessions**

*Family Level*  
**Residence and Furnishings**

*Community Level*  
**Neighborhood or Town**

*Group Level*  
**Social Groups**

# Sex Roles

## Gender Differences in Socialization

**Males:**  
**Agentic Goals Such as**  
**Self-Assertion, Mastery**

**Females:**  
**Communal Goals Such As**  
**Affiliation, Relationships**

## Gender Versus Sexual Identity

**Sex-Typed Traits**

**Sex-Typed Products**

**Androgyny**

**Roles**



# **Sex Roles**

## **Female Gender Roles**

**Homemaker**

**Professional  
Career**

**Just-a-Job**

**Cheesecake**

## **Male Sex Roles**

**Male  
Bonding**

**Freedom of  
Choices**

**Fatherhood**

**Beefcake**

**Gay and Lesbian Consumers**

# Body Image

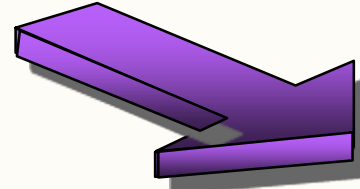
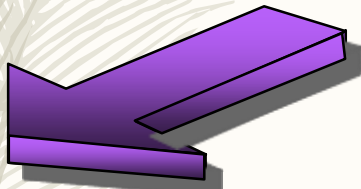
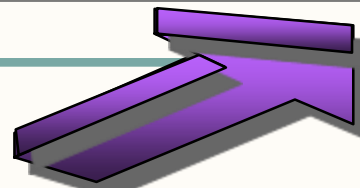
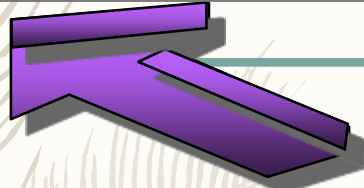
**Body Cathexis**

**Ideals of Beauty**

**Body Issues in  
Consumer Behavior**

**Fattism**

**Cosmetic Surgery**



# Body Image

- A person's feelings about his or her body can be described in terms of **Body Cathexis**.
- **Ideals of Beauty**

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  - A person's satisfaction with the physical image he or she presents to others is affected by how closely that image corresponds to the image valued by his or her culture.
  - Examples of ideals are physical features, clothing styles, cosmetics, hairstyles, skin tones and body type.
  - **Sexual Dimorphic Markers** - those aspects of the body that distinguish between the sexes.

# Working on the Body

## — Fattism

- The pressure to be slim is continually reinforced by advertising and peers.
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## — Body Image Distortions

- Exaggeration of appearance importance can result in disorders of great magnitude such as anorexia or bulimia.

## — Cosmetic Surgery

- Consumers increasingly are electing to have cosmetic surgery to change a poor body image.

# Body Decoration and Mutilation



**Separate Group Members From Nonmembers**

**Place the Individual in the Social Organization**

**Place the Person in a Gender Category**

**Enhance Sex-Role Identification**

**Indicate Desired Social Conduct**

**Indicate High Status or Rank**

**Provide a Sense of Security**