

Inside the Psychologist's Studio: Claude Steele

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Past APS Board Member Claude Steele says his social psychology research — on topics ranging from self-image to alcohol's effects on attention — reached a new level of quality once he learned to take the perspective of the actor, not the observer.

In a newly released “Inside the Psychologist's Studio” interview, the acclaimed scientist says adopting the subjects' viewpoint helped him design more effective experiments.

“When you take the perspective of somebody who's actually in a psychological situation, like a student who's intoxicated, everything is a lot clearer, and your intuition is better informed,” Steele said in the interview.

During his interview with APS Past President Elizabeth Phelps, Steele — now executive vice chancellor and provost at the University of California, Berkeley — talked extensively about his life and his research, which builds on his various theories of self-identity. These include:

- Stereotype threat — the state of feeling at risk of confirming stereotypes about one's social group.
- Self-affirmation — how people adapt to information or experiences that threaten their self-concept; and
- Alcohol myopia — how intoxication narrows one's attention to the most salient environment cues.

The interview was filmed before a live audience last May at the 26th APS Annual Convention in San Francisco. “Inside the Psychologist's Studio,” modeled after the “Inside the Actor's Studio” series that aired on the Bravo cable television network, features senior luminaries in the field reflecting on their accomplishments. The entire collection of these interviews are available at www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/members/itps-videos.