

Evaluating Emotional Responses

August 15, 2011



Evaluation is something people do every day, whether they are assessing their to-do list or forming opinions about a book they're reading. William Cunningham is investigating how evaluating other people or objects leads to emotional responses. Through a combination of social psychological and cognitive neuroscience techniques, Cunningham has found that affective states (in other words, emotional states) are built moment to moment by multiple processes that link together relevant information about the person's environment with their own personal attitudes. He has studied these processes in various constructs including the study of prejudice, decision-making, political attitudes, morality and emotional development in children. Through his work, Cunningham is hoping to build a more complete picture of the processes behind emotion. His groundbreaking research made him one of the 2011 recipients of the [Janet Taylor Spence Award for Transformative Early Career Contributions](#) from the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

[Q&A with William A. Cunningham](#)