

How to Defuse a Hateful Slur

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The Huffington Post:

Well, now we have a psychological explanation for this counterintuitive phenomenon of self-labeling. Columbia University psychological scientist Adam Galinsky and his colleagues have come up with an elaborate model to illuminate self-disparagement — its origins, intentions, and consequences. The scientists ran ten experiments to begin documenting this novel theory.

It all has to do with power, and perceptions of power, in society. If social power is control over valuable resources, Galinsky argues, then self-labeling is the act of controlling words and their meaning. When black individuals use the derogatory group label *nigger*, or gay men and women adopt the stigmatizing term *queer*, it's a defiant action, an attempt to “capture” the label and deny it to others. The end result is to weaken the stigmatizing potency of the slurs.

Read the whole story: [The Huffington Post](#)

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