

New Research From Psychological Science

March 04, 2016

Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

[When the Spatial and Ideological Collide: Metaphorical Conflict Shapes Social Perception](#)

Tali Kleiman, Chadly Stern, and Yaacov Trope

In this study, the researchers examined what happens when physical and abstract aspects of a metaphor are in conflict. Participants categorized pictures of past presidents Bill Clinton (a liberal-left Democrat) and George W. Bush (a conservative-right Republican) using a left-hand button press for pictures of Clinton and a right-hand button press for pictures of Bush (compatible condition) or vice versa (incompatible condition). Participants also completed a category-breadth assessment. Participants in the incompatible condition viewed the difference in Clinton's and Bush's ideologies as being smaller than did those in the compatible condition. The researchers found that metaphorical conflict (as seen in the incompatible condition) broadened participants' perceived boundaries of categories, decreasing the perceived difference between the former presidents' beliefs.

Yaacov Trope is a [2016 APS Mentor Award Winner](#) and will be speaking in the Cross-Cutting Theme Program "The Meaning of Time" at the [28th APS Annual Convention](#) in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

[Is Empathic Accuracy Enough to Facilitate Responsive Behavior in Dyadic Interaction? Distinguishing Ability From Motivation](#)

Lauren A. Winczewski, Jeffrey D. Bowen, and Nancy L. Collins

Empathic accuracy is the ability to infer another's emotional state, whereas empathetic concern refers to feelings of compassion and sensitivity that motivate prosocial behavior. In this study, the researchers examined the joint effect of empathetic accuracy and concern on responsive behavior. Romantic couples were videotaped while they discussed a topic of personal or relationship stress, with one individual designated as a target and the other as a perceiver. The perceiver's empathetic concern, empathetic accuracy, and responsiveness toward the target was then assessed. The researchers found that when empathetic concern was high, empathetic accuracy was associated with greater responsiveness than when empathetic concern was low. This suggests that empathetic accuracy can help facilitate responsive behavior, but only when people are motivated to use this insight to act.