

Albert Bandura to Receive National Medal of Science

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Albert Bandura, who has received both the APS William James Fellow Award and the APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award, has been awarded the National Medal of Science. Bandura is a professor emeritus of psychology at Stanford University, where he has served on the faculty since 1953.

Awarded annually by a committee of presidential appointees, the National Medal of Science recognizes individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to science, technology, and engineering. In addition to Bandura, this year's other eight awardees include microbiologists, physicians, and theoretical physicists. Awardees will receive their medals at a White House ceremony in January.

"After realizing that the call was not a prank staged by my colleagues, this stellar honor still feels surreal to me," Bandura said in a press release. "The science medal also recognizes the far-reaching contributions of the discipline of psychology to human enlightenment and human betterment."

Regarded as one of the most influential psychological scientists in the world, Bandura's groundbreaking research has fundamentally shaped our understanding of learning and education. His seminal research on self-efficacy demonstrated that individuals' beliefs about their own capabilities affects their choices, motivations, and even well-being and health. Self-efficacy theory has had broad implications for everything from HIV prevention to classroom teaching strategies.

In some of the most famous experiments in the history of psychological science, Bandura used an inflatable clown doll named Bobo to demonstrate that learning depends on more than simply rewards and punishment. After watching an adult aggressively pummel a Bobo doll, children modelled the same aggressive behavior by kicking, hitting, and throwing the doll; children who watched a nonaggressive adult did not adopt the same degree of violent behavior toward the doll. These findings revolutionized the understanding of learning, leading to the development of social cognitive theory.

In one of the most widely viewed episodes of [Inside the Psychologist's Studio](#), Bandura explains how the Bobo experiments have become influential in ways he never could have foreseen — television programs throughout the world have utilized Bandura's modeling principles to tackle issues ranging from the prevention of child trafficking to improving adult literacy.