

Albert Bandura Receives National Medal of Science

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President Obama presented eminent psychological scientist Albert Bandura with the National Medal of Science in a ceremony held at the White House on May 19, 2016. 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.

Bandura, professor emeritus of psychology at Stanford University, has received both the APS William James Fellow Award and the APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award and is considered one of the most influential psychological scientists in the world. Bandura's groundbreaking 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 a series of now-famous experiments, 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 modeled 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.