

Everyday Solutions to the Problem of Other Minds

Which Tools Are Used When?

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Intuiting what the people around us think, want, and feel is essential to much of social life. To bargain, we make assumptions about what a partner prefers or wants to avoid. To persuade, we try to intuit an audience's beliefs. To console, we infer the depth of a friend's grief. Whether we are sizing someone up or seducing him or her, assigning blame or extending our trust, we are very nearly always performing the ordinary magic of mindreading. In some sense, of course, we cannot read minds. Some scholars have gone so far as to declare the "problem of other minds"—whether a person can know if anyone else has thoughts and, if so, what they are—intractable. And yet countless times a day, we solve such problems with ease, if not perfectly then at least to our own satisfaction. What strategies underlie these everyday solutions? And how are these tools employed?

The perceiver's bag of tricks has revealed much of itself to scholars, and there is no need to invoke magic on the mindreader's behalf (see Figure 10.1). Perceivers rely in part on evidence-based induction, working with the raw data of local physical behavior (a grasping hand that

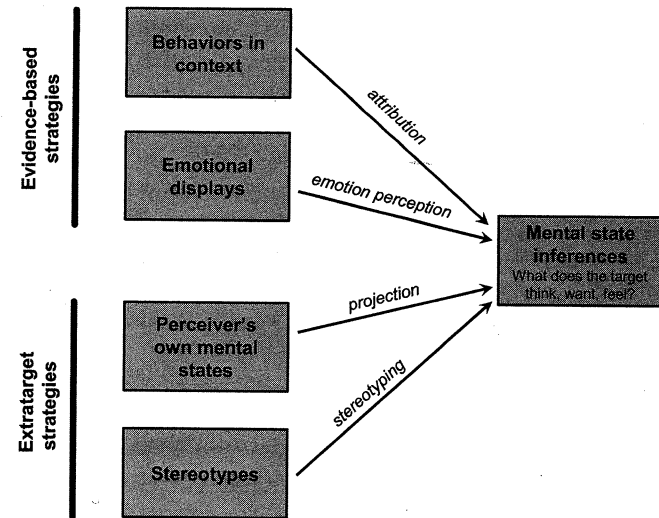


FIGURE 10.1. Mindreading strategies.

"wants") as well as more general chains of action in context (the colleague whose generosity to superiors but not subordinates signals ingratiation). Perceivers also take account of nonverbal behavior and displays of emotion, not only to intuit a target's fleeting feelings but also as a window onto the target's underlying goals. In short, perceivers readily work from the visible evidence of human behavior to posit invisible underlying mental states.

Along with these inductive approaches, perceivers often work from information and premises that are exogenous to a target and his or her behavior. Perceivers may consult their own general and enduring mental states and ascribe them to others ("I love cats and assume you do, too") and also engage in more effortful and situation-specific forms of perspective taking ("I'd be embarrassed if I were in your shoes"). Perceivers also invoke stereotypes, assuming a target's mental states correspond to those likely to be held by some larger category of people ("Jocks hate romantic comedies"). Thus, even without immediate evidence of a target's behavior, a perceiver may reason from stereotypes or from his or her own self to intuit what the target is thinking, wanting, or feeling.

There is every reason to think that *all* of these tools, as well as some others I do not elaborate here, play some role in everyday mindreading.¹ Sometimes multiple tools may be used simultaneously or in succession. Yet surely we rely on some tools at some times more than others. The central question I wish to address here, and that I suggest is not yet well

answered, is "Which tool is used when?" More complete and elegant answers to this question await us, but in the meantime I develop several claims in this chapter about which-tool-when contingencies. For instance, I suggest that perceptions of general similarity guide a trade-off between projection (ascribing one's own beliefs and desires to others) and stereotyping. I also claim that displays of self-conscious emotions, such as shame, can override inferences of malicious intent from harmful behavior, though only in the short run. Some of these claims are backed with mounting evidence, while others are more speculative. My hope, beyond aspiring to be mostly right, is that this discussion will provoke others to address the question of "Which tool when?" To the extent that mindreading governs much of social life, scholars are well served to understand how perceivers pursue it. And to the extent that perceivers pursue it with multiple inferential strategies, scholars are well served to explore the conditions governing when different approaches are employed.

EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES: BEHAVIOR AND AFFECTIVE DISPLAYS

From our earliest days, we are voracious and deft observers of ordinary human behavior. This consumption of overt acts is often in the service of intuiting unseen mental states. Work by Meltzoff and colleagues (e.g., Meltzoff & Brooks, 2001), for instance, shows that by even 6 months of age infants know that a grabbing hand entails *wanting*. When adults view an impoverished cartoon in which animated dots represent a person's arm and hand knocking on a door, they can readily intuit the phantom knocker's fear, excitement, and happiness (Pollick, Paterson, Bruderlin, & Sanford, 2001). From the smallest arch of a teasing eyebrow to the profound slouch of a disinterested onlooker, we fluidly intuit what others think from even the smallest scraps of static and dynamic evidence.

Scholars have also observed that perceivers are attuned to more elaborate and prolonged arcs of behavior as cues to underlying intentions. Social psychologists have long recognized that perceivers intuit an actor's intentions on the basis of behavior in the face of situational forces (e.g., Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967) and from the pattern of options he or she chooses and forgoes (Jones & Davis, 1965; Newton, 1974; see also Malle, 2004, for an overview).

Recent work has brought new attention to the role of situations in intuiting motives. Reeder and colleagues have shown that the same behaviors can imply vastly different motives depending on context (e.g.,

Reeder, Kumar, Hesson-McInnis, & Trafimow, 2002; see also Reeder & Trafimow, Chapter 7, this volume). For instance, when the same act of aggression is performed in a situation where it is provoked rather than one where it is self-serving, perceivers reach substantially different inferences about the aggressor's motives and morality. Meanwhile, Kammrath, Mendoza-Denton, and Mischel (in press) have highlighted that perceivers attend to profiles of behaviors across multiple situations to disambiguate underlying motives, showing that mental state inferences flow not just from behavioral base rates (e.g., how frequently someone is pleasant) but also from patterns across contexts (e.g., frequency of being pleasant to authorities vs. peers).

As targets of other people's perceptions, people are more than actors—they are reactors. Emotional displays are often behaviors *about* behaviors: a person beams when proud of her work, blushes when embarrassed by her acts, and scowls when foiled in her pursuits. In this sense, people's emotional displays are not so much intentional goal-driven behavior as unintentional reactions that stem from the match between one's goals and one's own behavior and outcomes. For the mindreader perceiving a target, these displays can reveal much, not only about passing emotional states but also about these underlying enduring motives and goals.

In recent work, my colleagues and I (Ames, Johar, & Kammrath, 2004) have explored how a target's affective displays shape inferences not only about his or her emotions but also about his or her broader intentions. Our research explored how a target's displays of self-evaluative emotions, such as embarrassment and guilt, lead perceivers to ascribe intentions to the target that were at odds with the target's overt behaviors. Extending self-presentational ideas from Goffman (1959), we argued that emotional displays help perceivers intuit how the actor regards his or her behavior and outcomes: certain negative displays can signal "that's not me" (discounting), while positive ones can signal "that's definitely me" (augmenting). Our results show that displays of self-evaluative negative affect, such as shame, after harm lead to more positive impressions of harm-doers, compared to neutral or positive affect displays, for targets ranging from violent criminals to colleagues who declined to provide a favor (Ames et al., 2004). Conversely, displays of positive affect (vs. negative affect) while helping lead to more positive impressions of helpers. Both the discounting and augmenting effects on general impressions were mediated by inferred mental states: remorseful harm-doers and cheerful helpers were both seen as having more prosocial underlying motives.

But can these affective displays endlessly correct for engaging in

harmful behaviors? Certainly not. Perceivers appear to be reasonably forgiving in isolated cases, recognizing that actions and outcomes do not necessarily correspond to a target's underlying intentions. In effect, an immediate and heartfelt apology or even a pained nonverbal expression from a new acquaintance is seen as more indicative of his innocent intentions than the red wine he has just spilled on our rug. Indeed, we may even like a genuinely and appropriately remorseful spiller (diagnosis: benign) more than a harmless guest (diagnosis: uncertain). But at some point repeated harm takes over, and the stain, as it were, becomes impossible to remove. This yields a first contingency:

Affect qualifies behavior in the near term: perceived remorseful affect can lead to ascriptions of good intent to harm-doers in the short run, but repeated harm drives long-run ascriptions of bad intent.

In one study, we asked participants to imagine being paired with a classmate on a school project (Ames et al., 2004). Participants then read about a series of negative episodes involving the classmate (e.g., she showed up late for a meeting), recording their mental state inferences and impressions after each one. For some participants, the episodes were matched with photos of the classmate displaying negative self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment and shame. For others, the photos were neutral. After the initial episode, participants seeing the negative affect displays had far more positive impressions of the target and generally assumed positive intentions (for instance, agreeing that the target wanted to be kind and respectful). After three episodes of harm (e.g., breaking the participant's cell phone, failing to complete work), impressions and mental state inferences were increasingly negative in both display conditions, though they were still significantly more positive in the remorse display condition. However, by six negative episodes (e.g., forgetting the participant's name, delivering bad work), the gap had closed: regardless of affective display, all participants had strongly negative assumptions about the target's mental states and personality. The repeated acts of harm outweighed the repeated displays of self-conscious emotions.

In sum, mindreaders often work from a target's behavior, considering not only local action (e.g., an act of help) but also arcs of behavior over time and across situations (e.g., helping authorities but not peers). Mindreaders also look to displays of emotions to intuit how actors feel about their own behavior and outcomes. In the short run, these affective displays may augment or discount behaviors; but in the longer run, behaviors appear to speak more loudly than affect.

EXTRATARGET STRATEGIES: PROJECTION AND STEREOTYPING

The wheels of inference rarely stop when bottom-up data are lacking. Indeed, in some cases, judgments made before any behavioral evidence is available may be hard to overturn despite an abundance of evidence to the contrary. In some of my own work on mindreading in two-party negotiations, I've found that the best predictor of a negotiator's post-interaction judgments about his or her partner's motives (e.g., "He wanted what was best for both of us") were not his or her partner's behaviors during the negotiation but the former's own expectations about the unfamiliar partner before the interaction even began.

I wish to focus on two sources of mindreading that are not based on behavioral evidence: *projection*, when the perceiver assumes a target has the same mental states that he or she has or would have, and *stereotyping*, when the perceiver assumes a target has mental states that correspond to some prior expectancy about a social category. In social psychology, projection has often been studied in connection with false consensus, a pattern of judgment that emerges when perceivers overestimate the extent to which others share their own attitudes, qualities, and behaviors. In most false consensus research, participants indicate their own yes/no response to a question and then estimate what percentage of other people would say yes/no. For instance, participants in a study by Krueger and Clement (1994) indicated agreement with the statement "I like to read newspaper articles on crime." Those who agreed, on average, expected 59% of people to also agree, while those who disagreed expected only 43% of people, on average, to agree with the statement. Most false consensus scholars interpret such a pattern of results as evidence of projection (e.g., Krueger, 1998). While various explanations for false consensus have been proposed, ranging from self-serving motivations to egocentric perception, the effect is sufficiently widespread that many researchers regard various forms of projection as primary, if not sovereign, forces in social judgment (see, e.g., Krueger, 2003; Van Boven & Loewenstein, in press).

Although projection has received lavish scholarly attention as a source of mindreading, stereotyping has been almost entirely ignored. The lack of integration appears on both ends: most stereotyping scholars examine the impact of stereotypes on broad impressions rather than mental state inferences, whereas most scholars of folk psychology have not given stereotypes an explicit role in everyday mindreading. Nonetheless, there is every reason to expect that the widespread importance of stereotyping in social judgment extends to mindreading. Scattered evidence confirms as much: beliefs about a target's race appear to have sub-

stantial effects on perceivers' expectations about what the target is feeling (e.g., Hugenberg & Bodenhausen, 2003) and trying to do (e.g., Sagar & Schofield, 1980).

Thus, projection and stereotyping each play some role in mind-reading. But what governs when each will be invoked? And do they often function as alternative inferential strategies? Few answers to these questions exist, because most social psychological models focus on only one route or the other. Projection is rarely cast as an alternative to stereotyping, and, likewise, stereotyping is rarely described as an alternative to projection. Yet, I suggest that these judgmental strategies not only guide mindreading but also often displace each other in inferences. This yields a second contingency:

Perceived similarity governs projection and stereotyping: perceptions of general similarity to a target typically draw a mindreader toward projection and away from stereotyping; perceived dissimilarity does the opposite.

I suggest that a greater sense of general similarity to a target evokes higher levels of projection of specific and novel mental states, whereas a diminished sense of general similarity to a target evokes higher levels of stereotyping. Importantly, I have repeatedly found that perceived similarity is often only weakly related to measures of actual similarity (see, e.g., Ames, 2004b). In my research, I have capitalized on the perceiver's tendency to overgeneralize similarity: when a perceiver finds one thing in common with a partner, he or she seems readily to expect that he or she has most everything (including a wide range of beliefs, desires, and feelings) in common. Upon learning that my new acquaintance shares my love for disco music, for instance, I may willingly intuit that she also shares my libertarian values and would be just as embarrassed as I would be if asked to speak in public.

This effect emerges for dissimilarities as well: upon learning she differs from a target in some particular way, the perceiver may assume she differs in many ways. When such a gulf opens between the self and other, stereotypes are likely to rush in. Thus, when I learn that my new Canadian collaborator hates my favorite comedian, I may feel a chasm between us and turn to my national stereotypes—however baseless—intuiting that, unlike me, he loves playing hockey and eating back bacon.

Evidence for these effects is accumulating. One set of studies (Ames, 2004a) manipulated perceived similarity to individual targets by providing participants with cues about shared or unshared attributes. For instance, some participants learned that a target shared their preference for a painting by Klee over one by Kandinsky or that a target shared

their guilty verdict in a hypothetical criminal case. Other participants learned that the target preferred the Kandinsky painting or issued an innocent verdict. As expected, these specific cues affected general judgments about similarity. Those who perceived more similarity to a target showed higher levels of projection and lower levels of stereotyping in inferences about an unrelated domain, intuiting the target's competitive motives in a negotiation. In this and other studies, perceived general similarity appeared to moderate the use of inferential strategies in mind-reading (Ames, 2004a).

Similar effects emerge for inferences about *group* mental states (Ames, 2004b). In one study, urban university student participants were asked to write about their general similarities to, or differences from, suburban adolescents of the same sex. Those writing about similarities saw themselves as generally more similar to the target group than those writing about differences. In a subsequent task, participants indicated how much they and the target group would like a series of movies based on hypothetical plot summaries. Those who focused on similarities to the group engaged in higher levels of projection for the movie preferences, assuming the group members' preferences would more closely parallel their own tastes. Those who had previously focused on differences engaged in higher levels of stereotyping, assuming adolescent females would show greater preference for movies consistent with a widespread female stereotype (stressing personal growth, dialogue, romance, and sad scenes) while males would show greater preference for movies consistent with a widespread male stereotype (stressing violence, action, nudity, and slapstick comedy).

In sum, research on individual and group-level mindreading has shown a negative relationship between projection and stereotyping. While it is not necessarily or always the case that projection and stereotyping function as alternative strategies that displace each other, such a tension may often emerge. Subjective perceptions of general similarity, whether accurate or not, appear to at least partly guide when these tools are used in mindreading.

EVIDENCE-BASED AND EXTRATARGET STRATEGIES IN INTERACTION

In the preceding sections, I've suggested contingencies within behavioral evidence-based strategies (acts versus emotional displays) and within extratarget strategies (projection versus stereotyping), but how are these *classes* of strategies employed and traded off against one another in mindreading? Prior work in related domains suggests that a range of fac-

tors may be involved (see Beike & Sherman, 1994). Drawing on this work, I'll offer a rather general third contingency:

Cumulative behavioral evidence supersedes extratarget strategies: projection and stereotyping will drive mindreading when behavioral evidence is ambiguous, but as apparent evidence accumulates, inductive judgments will dominate.

Several existing models suggest that extratarget strategies (projection, stereotyping) may be a default starting point for much of social inference. Notably, Fiske and Neuberg's (1990) and Brewer's (1988) influential models of stereotyping suggest that social category-based reasoning is a default or initial stage of judgment. According to these and similar accounts, individuating information about a target and his or her behavior are taken into account only when conditions (time, cognitive resources, motivation, and so forth) permit. Like much of stereotyping research, these models revolve around general trait impressions of targets rather than mindreading per se. Yet, given that impression formation is often a matter of mindreading (e.g., to judge if someone is a helpful person, I may first intuit whether he or she has helpful intentions), it seems reasonable to think these same stereotype-by-default effects might extend to mental state inferences.

Other accounts suggest a projection-by-default effect. Recently, Krueger (2003) suggested that "When the responses of others are not known, people project their own as a first bet" (p. 589). Similarly, Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, and Gilovich (2004) have offered an anchoring-and-adjustment model of perspective taking, suggesting that social projection serves as an initial estimate for others' mental states with subsequent and often inadequate adjustments made from this point (see also Barr & Keysar, Chapter 17, and Van Boven & Loewenstein, Chapter 18, in this volume). Their research has shown that time pressure may reduce these adjustments while accuracy incentives may increase them.

Thus, extratarget starting points—whether based on a stereotype or on the self—may be common for mindreaders. There are also reasons to expect that when mindreaders carry such prior assumptions into interactions with targets, these assumptions can become self-fulfilling. Snyder and Swann's (1978) classic work on confirmation processes in impression formation suggests that perceivers may disproportionately elicit and attend to confirming evidence from targets. Likewise, Kelley and Stahelski's (1970) research on social dilemmas describes how competitive players can "assimilate" their cooperative partners: in mistakenly assuming their dove-like partners have hawk-like intentions, competitive players can behave in such a way as to give their cooperative partners little

choice but to compete, thereby seemingly confirming the competitive player's initial misguided assumption.

Despite the power of initial expectations and the presence of such self-fulfilling prophecies, initial impressions do change, and the effects of initial mindreading are not entirely rigid. One reason may be a decrease in the potency of stereotypes over the course of an interaction. Recent evidence from Kunda and colleagues (e.g., Kunda, Davies, Adams, & Spencer, 2002) suggests that stereotype activation may dissipate over relatively short periods of time. In one study, after several seconds of observing an interview with a black target person, nonblack participants showed implicit cognitive activation of widely held stereotypes of blacks; after 12 minutes of observation, however, no such activation was evident (Kunda et al., 2002).

Thus, activation of stereotypes may naturally fade, leading to a waning effect on mindreading. Beside such dissipation effects, compelling behavioral evidence that runs counter to stereotypes may override stereotype-driven mindreading. For instance, Krueger and Rothbart (1988) showed that at low levels of behavioral evidence strong stereotypes clearly shaped impressions (e.g., construction workers were seen as more aggressive than housewives). However, when evidence was strong (e.g., consistent aggressive behavior), impressions shifted across the board, and stereotype effects became nonsignificant. Elsewhere, Weisz and Jones (1993) argued that perceivers show a readiness to relinquish category-based expectancies in the face of contradicting behavioral information, in part because of perceivers' willingness to subtype individuals (i.e., continuing to believe the stereotype is still generally true, just not for the focal individual). Flynn, Chatman, and Spataro (2001) found that demographically different work partners were less likely to be negatively stereotyped when they had higher levels of extraversion; the researchers suggested that this effect emerged because extraverted targets provided more stereotype-disconfirming evidence. As with the stereotyping research discussed earlier, these findings have focused on general trait impressions, but it seems likely such effects would extend to mental state inferences.

Stereotypes may thus give way, in part or whole, to accumulating evidence—but what of projection? The question appears to have received only limited attention from social psychologists. In one set of studies, Krueger and Clement (1994) found that, when estimating others' behavior, participants anchored on their own behavior and gradually, though suboptimally, adjusted their estimates as they were provided with information about an increasing number of other cases. Some developmental evidence addresses the emerging ability of children to shift away from projection in light of behavioral evidence. Repacholi and

Gopnik (1997) matched children with an adult experimenter who, contrary to the near universal preference of children, showed disgust when presented with Goldfish snack crackers and displayed delight when presented with broccoli flowerets. When 14-month-olds played a give-and-take game in which the experimenter asked "Can you give me some?" nearly all seemingly projected their own preferences and offered up crackers. By 18 months of age, however, nearly all children deferred to the behavioral evidence and, against their own tastes, offered the broccoli.

It's worth noting, at least in passing, other factors that may affect the balance of power between behavioral-evidence and extratarget mindreading strategies (see Beike & Sherman, 1994, for a review). Effortful examination of behavioral evidence may be stimulated by interaction goals and self-relevancy (e.g., Brewer, 1988) as well as accountability for one's judgments (e.g., Tetlock, 1983). Such consideration of behavioral evidence may be inhibited by cognitive load (e.g., Gilbert & Hixon, 1991), time constraints (e.g., Epley et al., 2004), and social power (e.g., Fiske, 1993).

NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE INFORMATION

What do perceivers most want to know when they read others' minds? Mindreaders are not agnostic onlookers, equally interested in all manner of mental states. On the contrary, perceivers are highly motivated to figure out the interactional and relational motives of the person they're dealing with. For instance, I am vastly more interested in knowing if someone is discreetly trying to take advantage of me as opposed to, say, whether they like my favorite politician or prefer my hair parted on the right rather than the left. Perceivers are not only keen to know someone's social motives in general, but they are also especially vigilant about whether the target has *harmful* motives toward *them*.

This notion is reflected in a variety of work which suggests that, in general, "bad is stronger than good" in psychological life (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001) and that negative information, especially negative *moral* information, is more attention-grabbing (Pratto & John, 1991) and is weighed more heavily in impressions (e.g., Reeder & Coover, 1986; Ybarra, 2001). This sentiment also seems to be consistent with work on cheater detection and the Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis (e.g., Whiten, 1997), which variously suggests that the evolution of theory of mind may have been partly spurred by the need to defend against exploitation by duplicitous conspecifics. Thus, another plausible contingency is:

Negative social intention information weighs heavily in mindreading: within a mindreading strategy, cues signaling negative social intentions may dominate neutral or positive cues; between mindreading strategies, those strategies that signal negative social intentions may dominate.

The within-strategy effect may be most meaningful for stereotypes and behaviors. For instance, one could imagine that, upon meeting an ex-convict librarian, a perceiver's mindreading may be more swayed by the ex-convict stereotype than the librarian one. As for behaviors, previous work (e.g., Reeder & Coover, 1986) suggests that negative behaviors worsen positive initial impressions more than positive behaviors improve negative initial impressions.

There does not appear to be much work on mindreading that tests for negative evaluation effects *between* inferential strategies. Nonetheless, it is tempting to speculate that a negative stereotype might be particularly resistant to positive behavioral evidence. Conversely, negative behaviors might quickly swamp a positive stereotype. One mechanism underlying such an effect could be attention. For instance, Fox and colleagues have shown that perceivers are faster to detect, look longer at, and are more reluctant to disengage from, angry faces (Fox, Russo, & Dutton, 2002). It's an empirical question, but one can readily imagine that a perceiver confronted by a snarling nun might instinctively defer to behavioral evidence, whereas a perceiver confronted by a cheerful soldier of fortune might nonetheless cling to stereotypes.

This contingency concerning negative social information is admittedly speculative and rather general. Whether or not it will survive additional testing and elaboration remains to be seen, but behind this contingency lies an important pair of questions deserving further thought, namely, "Which kinds of mental states are mindreaders most interested in intuiting" and "How do these priorities shape the mindreader's use of cues and inferential strategies?"

CONCLUSION

Scholarly accounts of mindreading may have become so numerous and compelling that, in some ways, the question is no longer "how do people read minds?" but rather "how *don't* they?" in any given instance. Researchers have mapped out much of the perceiver's toolkit, but have only begun to account for which tool is used when.

Several important strategies seem to account for much of everyday mindreading. Some of these revolve around direct evidence from the tar-

get (scrutinizing behaviors in context; reading emotional displays) while others rely on extratarget information (applying stereotypes; projecting one's own beliefs, desires, and feelings). It may be that these strategies are often used in combination, as when we rely on a stereotype to interpret an emotional display. Yet, I suggest perceivers frequently shift between these strategies, which begs questions about when and why such shifts occurs.

In this chapter, I offered four contingencies about when various inferential tools might be used. I suggested that affect qualifies behavior in the short term, that perceived similarity governs projection and stereotyping, that cumulative behavioral evidence supersedes extratarget strategies, and that negative social intention information weighs heavily in mindreading. These contingencies have varying degrees of empirical support and would benefit from additional research and thinking. Additional or alternative contingencies are certainly possible. Regardless of the content of a contingency, though, important associated questions emerge, including:

- *What's the developmental course of the contingency?* Perhaps 5-year-olds shift strategies differently from 50-year-olds.
- *What are the consequences of the contingency?* The contingency may entail benefits in terms of speed or accuracy as well as costs in terms of effort and distortion.
- *What cognitive mechanisms could instantiate the contingency?* Some contingencies might themselves be inferential rules that are implicitly represented, while others imply cognitive processes, such as parallel-constraint satisfaction and coherence mechanisms (e.g., Kunda & Thagard, 1996; Read & Miller, 1998) or anchoring-and-adjustment (e.g., Epley et al., 2004).

Though the present space does not permit it, each of these issues could be fruitfully examined for the contingencies offered here. These same questions apply to other contingencies—and I hope more such proposals will soon be offered. The story of everyday mindreading will not be complete until we can answer the question of “Which tools are used when?” This chapter sketches some seemingly promising possibilities; I look forward to seeing more responses emerge.

NOTE

1. Several other meaningful strategies are not portrayed in Figure 10.1. One is reasoning by *analogy*. As various scholars have argued (e.g., Andersen,

Glassman, Chen, & Cole, 1995), we may use familiar others as templates for new acquaintances. Such effects seem likely to extend to mindreading: a blind date may remind us of a past romantic partner, and so we may assume he or she has the same tastes, passions, and pathologies as our “ex.” More generally, perceivers may consult *generic prototypes*, representations of what the prototypical person would think and feel in a given situation (e.g., Karniol, 2003). Another strategy is the reliance on well-developed *prior impressions* of specific individuals in our subsequent interactions with them (see, e.g., Weisz & Jones's [1993] discussion of target-based expectancies). Such person-specific theories may guide much of our daily mindreading with close others.

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