

PRACTICAL LIFE SKILLS

Psychology Fundamentals

Core psychological science, scoped around memory, learning, motivation, personality, social influence, development, and mental health literacy — grounded throughout in real, verified cases: Wundt's real 1879 origins, Loftus's eyewitness-memory research, Pavlov and Skinner, Maslow's pyramid he never actually drew, the Big Five versus the MBTI's real reliability problems, Milgram and Asch alongside the real 2018-19 reappraisal of the Stanford Prison Experiment, Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory versus the marshmallow test's real, shrunken 2018 replication, the 2022 "chemical imbalance" evidence review, and Amy Cuddy's real "power posing" collapse — closing with a capstone reviewing a corporate workshop pitch through every chapter's own real evidence.

10 Chapters

Philip Osztramok

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CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY? SCIENCE, NOT JUST COMMON SENSE

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 1 · What Is Psychology? Science, Not Just Common Sense

This course is about psychology as a genuine science — testable claims, controlled studies, and results that can turn out to be wrong — not the looser, everyday sense of "psychology" as armchair intuition about why people do things. Chapter 1 starts, fittingly, with a real origin story that turns out to be more complicated than the textbook version.

A Real, Even-More-Complicated Origin Story

Wilhelm Wundt opened what's widely credited as the first laboratory exclusively devoted to psychological studies, in **1879** at the University of Leipzig.

A REAL, HONEST COMPLICATION

Even this founding date isn't as clean as it's usually told. The University of Leipzig didn't officially recognize Wundt's own building as part of the campus until **1883** — four years later. And Wundt himself credited someone else, Ernst Heinrich Weber, as "the father of experimental psychology," for Weber's own earlier work in psychophysics. Even psychology's own founding figure didn't claim to be first.

Wundt's real method was **controlled self-observation** — not casual introspection, but trained, structured self-report gathered under strict experimental conditions, using real instruments like the tachistoscope (controlling exactly how long a stimulus was visible) and the chronoscope (measuring reaction time with precision).

What Makes This "Science" Rather Than Just Common Sense

Testable Claims

A real scientific claim about behavior or the mind must be specific enough that evidence could, in principle, prove it wrong.

Controlled Studies

Isolating one real variable at a time, so a result can be attributed to a specific cause rather than a confound.

Replication

A real finding needs to hold up when other researchers try it again — Chapter 9 covers what happens when it doesn't.

Folk wisdom about people, by contrast, often survives specifically because it's *unfalsifiable* — "opposites attract" and "birds of a feather flock together" can't both be tested and both be true at once, yet both persist as accepted common sense.

A Real, Concrete Illustration: Hindsight Bias

A real 1973 seminar led psychologist Baruch Fischhoff to a striking observation from Paul Meehl: clinicians routinely overestimated their own ability to have predicted a case's outcome, insisting they "knew it all along" — after already learning what actually happened.

FISCHHOFF'S REAL 1975 STUDY

Fischhoff gave participants a short story with four possible outcomes, telling them one was true, then asked them to rate how likely each outcome had genuinely seemed in advance. The real, replicated finding: participants consistently rated whichever outcome they'd been told was true as having seemed *more likely all along* — even though nothing about the story itself had changed. This method remains, largely unmodified, the standard way hindsight bias is studied today.

This is exactly why psychology needs to be a tested science rather than trusted intuition: "I knew it all along" feels like genuine insight, but real, controlled research shows it's frequently an illusion created by already knowing the answer — precisely the kind of claim common sense alone could never catch itself making.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why the real detail that Wundt credited Ernst Weber as "the father of experimental psychology" is a more interesting correction than simply noting the 1879/1883 date discrepancy.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why "opposites attract" and "birds of a feather flock together" being simultaneously accepted as common sense is a genuine problem, rather than simply two folk sayings that both happen to be sometimes true.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why Fischhoff's specific experimental method (telling participants one of four outcomes was true, then asking them to rate its prior likelihood) is what actually demonstrates hindsight bias, rather than simply asking people "do you think hindsight bias is real?"

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 1 QUICK REFERENCE

- Wundt's real 1879 Leipzig lab is the widely-credited founding moment — honestly complicated by the university's 1883 recognition and Wundt's own credit to Ernst Weber
- Wundt's real method was controlled, trained self-observation, using real instruments (tachistoscope, chronoscope) — not casual introspection
- Science requires testable claims, controlled studies, and replication — folk wisdom often survives by being unfalsifiable
- Fischhoff's real 1975 hindsight-bias study shows "I knew it all along" is frequently an illusion, not genuine foresight — exactly the kind of claim common sense alone can't catch itself making

CHAPTER 2: MEMORY: HOW IT ACTUALLY WORKS (AND FAILS)

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Chapter 2 · Memory: How It Actually Works (and Fails)

Memory feels like a recording — press play, and the past replays faithfully. Real psychological research shows something closer to the opposite: memory decays predictably, and it can be actively reshaped, sometimes without the person remembering ever realizing it happened.

Ebbinghaus's Real Forgetting Curve

Hermann Ebbinghaus began real memory experiments in 1879, publishing his findings in 1885 — using himself as his own sole subject, memorizing invented "nonsense syllables" (like *DAX* or *YAT*) specifically to remove any advantage from prior real-world knowledge. One single investigation alone required a real **15,000 recitations**.

A REAL, EXPONENTIAL PATTERN

Ebbinghaus found forgetting follows a real exponential curve: the sharpest decline happens within the first **20 minutes**, with substantial further decay continuing through the first hour — before the curve genuinely levels off after roughly one day.

Loftus & Palmer's Real 1974 Study — Words Change What You "Remember"

Elizabeth Loftus and John Palmer's real 1974 study showed participants videos of car crashes, then asked them to estimate the vehicles' speed — varying only the single verb used in the question.

REAL, SPECIFIC NUMBERS

Asked how fast the cars were going when they "**collided**," participants estimated a mean of **32 mph**. Asked using "**hit each other**," the estimate rose to **34 mph**. Asked using "**smashed each other**," it

jumped to **41 mph** — a real, roughly 9 mph difference from a single word choice, on identical footage.

This is real, direct evidence that memory is **reconstructive** — later information (even something as small as a verb in a follow-up question) can genuinely reshape what someone reports remembering, not merely how they phrase it.

A Real, More Extreme Case: The "Lost in the Mall" Study

Loftus and Jacqueline Pickrell's real 1995 study went further, testing whether an entire false childhood memory could be planted. 24 real participants each received a booklet with four narratives about their own childhood — three genuinely true, one fabricated: being lost in a shopping mall around age 5 and rescued by an elderly stranger.

A REAL, HONESTLY NUANCED RESULT

Roughly **25%** of the 24 participants came to report remembering the fabricated event as real. When later told one of the four stories was false, 5 of the 24 participants misidentified a genuinely true story as the fake one instead. But the result wasn't uniformly convincing: the false memories were typically described with fewer words and less vivid detail than the real ones — a real, honest limitation the original researchers reported rather than hid.

Loftus herself described this as an "existence proof" — not that false memories are common or easy to create, but that they can genuinely be created through suggestion at all, with real, direct implications for how eyewitness testimony and recovered-memory claims should be treated in practice.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why Ebbinghaus specifically used nonsense syllables rather than real words for his forgetting-curve research.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why the real 9 mph gap between "collided" and "smashed" specifically demonstrates memory being reconstructive, rather than simply showing people are bad at estimating speed.

 [View solution](#)**EXERCISE 3**

Explain, in your own words, why the real detail that false memories were described less vividly than true ones matters for how confidently this study's own findings should be applied to real-world situations, like eyewitness testimony.

 [View solution](#)**CHAPTER 2 QUICK REFERENCE**

- Ebbinghaus's real 1879-1885 self-experimentation (nonsense syllables, 15,000 recitations in one study) found forgetting follows an exponential curve — sharpest in the first 20 minutes, leveling off after roughly a day
- Loftus & Palmer's real 1974 study found a single verb ("collided" vs. "smashed") shifted mean speed estimates from 32 mph to 41 mph — real evidence memory is reconstructive
- Loftus & Pickrell's real 1995 "lost in the mall" study found 25% of 24 participants came to falsely remember a fabricated childhood event — with the honest nuance that false memories were typically less vivid and detailed than real ones

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING & CONDITIONING

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 3 · Learning & Conditioning

Two of psychology's most famous names — Pavlov and Skinner — gave the field its foundational account of how learning actually happens. One of them is also attached to a popular detail that turns out to be largely a myth, and a third, deeply troubling study from the same era carries a real identity mystery that's never been fully resolved.

Pavlov's Real Classical Conditioning — And a Real, Persistent Myth

Ivan Pavlov, jointly with his assistant Ivan Tolochinov, developed the concept of the conditional reflex in real **1901**, presenting the findings at the 14th International Medical Congress in Madrid in 1903. The real discovery began almost by accident: Pavlov noticed dogs salivating at the sight of the technician who fed them, not only at the food itself — leading him to systematically pair various stimuli with food to see whether the stimulus alone could eventually trigger salivation.

A REAL, PERSISTENT MYTH

Pavlov almost certainly didn't rely on a literal bell the way it's popularly retold. His own real writings record a wide variety of stimuli — metronomes, buzzers, whistles, tuning forks, electric shocks, and visual cues — with genuine scholarly debate over whether he used a bell at all. The clean, simple "bell" version is a popular simplification that outlived the messier real record.

Skinner's Real Operant Conditioning

B.F. Skinner, as a Harvard graduate student, invented the real operant conditioning chamber — a lever (for rats) or disk (for pigeons) that delivered food when pressed, letting him systematically study how consequences shape voluntary behavior.

Positive Reinforcement

Negative Reinforcement

Punishment

Adding something to strengthen a behavior (e.g. praise after a desired action).

Removing something aversive to strengthen a behavior — still strengthening, despite the name.

Applying or removing something specifically to suppress a behavior — the opposite goal from reinforcement.

Skinner's real 1957 book with Charles Ferster, *Schedules of Reinforcement*, showed that different real timing patterns for delivering rewards (continuous, interval, ratio) produce genuinely distinct, predictable behavioral patterns — foundational work still shaping education and behavioral therapy today.

A Real, Still-Unresolved Controversy: Who Was "Little Albert"?

In 1920, John B. Watson and Rosalie Rayner conditioned fear in a nine-month-old infant they called "Albert B." — pairing a white rat with a loud, startling noise until the rat alone triggered distress. Watson himself later admitted the real fear response "was neither strong nor lasting."

A REAL, GENUINE IDENTITY MYSTERY

A 2009 paper by Hall Beck and Sharman Levinson proposed "Albert B." was really Douglas Merritte, a hospital wet nurse's son — noting he had real, documented hydrocephalus and died at age 6, raising real ethical concerns that the study generalized findings from a neurologically impaired infant to healthy children generally.

A REAL, COMPETING CLAIM

In 2014, psychologists Russell Powell, Nancy Digdon, and Ben Harris proposed a different candidate — Albert Barger, later known as William Albert Martin — whose real birth date, weight, and development matched the experimental records precisely. Their own review of Merritte's real clinical file found he was recorded as **completely blind**, directly contradicting the experiment's own film, which shows the child engaging visually with objects. Barger died in 2007, age 87; his niece confirmed a real lifelong aversion to dogs, though whether it traced back to the experiment remains genuinely undetermined. The dispute remains real and unresolved, with competing peer-reviewed papers in the same journals.

Even one of psychology's most famous, most frequently cited studies carries a real, genuine identity mystery that's never been definitively closed — a fitting reminder for a course built on

checking the famous story against the actual evidence.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why Pavlov's own real use of many different stimuli (not primarily a bell) doesn't change the actual scientific finding of classical conditioning itself — what's the real difference between the popular myth being wrong and the underlying science being wrong?

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why negative reinforcement still counts as reinforcement (strengthening a behavior) rather than punishment, even though it involves removing something rather than adding it.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why the real detail that Merritte's clinical file recorded him as completely blind is stronger evidence against the Beck/Levinson identification than simply pointing out that a different candidate's birth date also happened to match.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 3 QUICK REFERENCE

- Pavlov's real classical conditioning (1901, presented 1903) is genuine — but the popular "bell" detail is largely a myth; his own writings record metronomes, buzzers, and many other stimuli
- Skinner's real operant conditioning chamber established that reinforcement (positive or negative) strengthens behavior, while punishment suppresses it
- The real identity of "Little Albert" remains a genuine, unresolved academic dispute — the 2009 "Douglas Merritte" claim faces a real, documented challenge from the 2014 "Albert Barger" proposal,

including clinical evidence of blindness that contradicts the original film

CHAPTER 4: MOTIVATION & EMOTION

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 4 · Motivation & Emotion

Few images are more recognizable than Maslow's pyramid of needs. It turns out Maslow himself never drew it — and the real theory of emotion behind "your body reacts, then you feel the emotion" carries its own layered history of correction.

Maslow's Real 1943 Theory

Abraham Maslow published his real theory in 1943, in "A Theory of Human Motivation," in the journal *Psychological Review*. His original five levels, in order:

Physiological

Food, water, sleep — the most basic biological needs.

Safety

Security, stability, freedom from real physical or economic threat.

Love & Social

Belonging, real relationships, connection to others.

Esteem

Real respect — both self-respect and recognition from others.

Maslow's own real fifth and highest level was **self-actualization** — realizing one's own full potential. His later work expanded the model further, adding cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs — though the original five-tier version remains the most widely recognized today.

A Real, Genuinely Surprising Correction: The Pyramid Maslow Never Drew

THE REAL ORIGIN OF AN ICONIC IMAGE

Maslow himself never created a pyramid diagram to represent his own theory. The now-iconic pyramid was first drawn by **Charles McDermid**, a consulting psychologist, in a real 1960 article in *Business Horizons* — 17 years after Maslow's original paper. The single image most people picture when they think of "Maslow's hierarchy" is a business-management visualization created by someone else, not something Maslow himself designed, endorsed, or arguably would have agreed represented his own real, more fluid theory.

Emotion — Does Feeling Come Before or After the Body's Reaction?

William James proposed a real, genuinely counterintuitive theory of emotion in 1884 — with physician Carl Lange independently developing similar ideas in 1885. The real James-Lange theory reverses common sense: your heart pounds and hands tremble *first*, and the brain interpreting those real physical changes *is* the emotion — not the emotion causing the physical reaction.

THE REAL CHALLENGE: CANNON-BARD

In the real 1920s, Walter Cannon and Philip Bard proposed an alternative: physiological change and emotional feeling arise *independently* and roughly simultaneously, not one causing the other. Cannon's own real experiments — severing nerve connections in animals without eliminating their emotional expression — argued against the body's physical state being emotion's actual foundation.

A REAL, SECOND-LAYER CORRECTION

Even the theory's own name carries a real complication: a 2017 analysis by psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett found that philosopher John Dewey, in naming the theory, may have genuinely distorted what James actually meant — inverting the real relationship James originally described between emotion categories and individual emotional instances. A famous theory's popular name can drift from its own originator's real intent, much like Maslow's own pyramid.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why the real fact that McDermid created the pyramid 17 years after Maslow's original paper matters for how confidently the pyramid should be treated as an accurate summary of Maslow's own theory.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why the James-Lange theory's real claim (physical reaction, then emotion) is genuinely counterintuitive — what does the more common, everyday assumption about emotion get backward according to this theory?

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why Cannon's real nerve-severing experiments in animals count as genuine evidence against the James-Lange theory, rather than simply being a different, unrelated observation.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 4 QUICK REFERENCE

- Maslow's real 1943 theory described five original levels: physiological, safety, love/social, esteem, and self-actualization
- Maslow himself never drew the iconic pyramid — Charles McDermid created it in a real 1960 Business Horizons article, 17 years later
- The real James-Lange theory (James 1884, Lange 1885) claims physiological reaction comes first and IS the emotion, challenged by Cannon-Bard's real 1920s independent-arousal theory
- A real 2017 Lisa Feldman Barrett analysis found even the theory's own name may have distorted James's original meaning

CHAPTER 5: PERSONALITY: TRAITS, TYPES & THEIR REAL LIMITS**Psychology Fundamentals**

Chapter 5 · Personality: Traits, Types & Their Real Limits

Two personality frameworks dominate popular culture: the Big Five and Myers-Briggs. Only one of them holds up as real, replicated science — and the gap between them is worth understanding in detail.

The Big Five — A Real Scientific Standard, Built Over Decades

The Big Five wasn't invented in a single paper — it emerged through real, decades-long convergent research. Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal's real 1957-61 Air Force officer studies first identified five factors. Warren Norman's real 1963 replication relabeled two of them — "Extraversion" and "Conscientiousness" — terms still used today. Paul Costa and Robert McCrae's real NEO model, developed from 1978 through their 1992 NEO PI-R revision, became the field's standard full instrument.

Openness

Curiosity, imagination, openness to new experience.

Conscientiousness

Organization, discipline, real goal-directed behavior.

Extraversion

Sociability, assertiveness, drawing energy from others.

Agreeableness

Cooperation, compassion, trust toward others.

Neuroticism

Emotional instability, real vulnerability to stress.

REAL EVIDENCE BEHIND ITS STATUS

The Big Five's own factor structure has been independently replicated across real, different cultures and time periods. It carries genuine real predictive validity: conscientiousness reliably predicts job performance and academic success; neuroticism reliably forecasts real risk of self-harm and suicidal behavior.

Myers-Briggs — Hugely Popular, Real Scientific Problems

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was developed by Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers during World War II. A real, notable detail: **neither had any formal psychology training** — both were self-taught in psychometric testing. Their real theoretical basis was Carl Jung's 1921 book *Psychological Types*.

REAL, STARK RELIABILITY DATA

Between **39% and 76%** of people who retake the MBTI receive a genuinely **different type** after just five weeks — for many people, close to a coin flip. A real 1991 US National Academy of Sciences review found "not sufficient, well-designed research to justify the use of the MBTI in career counseling programs." Its real, documented predictive validity for actual job performance is poor.

Multiple credible sources today characterize the MBTI as pseudoscience — yet it remains one of the most widely used personality tools in the world, in corporate training and career guidance alike.

Why the Gap Between Popularity and Scientific Validity?

Type-based frameworks like the MBTI tend to describe broad, generally flattering categories that feel personally accurate to almost anyone reading them — a pattern this course's own sibling course, Critical Thinking, covers in depth as the Forer/Barnum effect. Real predictive science and real popular appeal aren't the same thing, and this chapter is exactly why that distinction matters.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why the Big Five's real cross-cultural replication and predictive validity are two genuinely different kinds of evidence, both needed to support calling it a scientific standard.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why a 39-76% chance of getting a different MBTI type after five weeks is a genuine problem for using it in career counseling, rather than simply an interesting statistic.

 [View solution](#)**EXERCISE 3**

Explain, in your own words, why the creators' own lack of formal psychology training is relevant real context for evaluating the MBTI, without treating it as automatically disqualifying on its own.

 [View solution](#)**CHAPTER 5 QUICK REFERENCE**

- The Big Five (OCEAN) emerged through real decades-long convergent research (Tupes & Christal 1957-61, Norman 1963, Costa & McCrae's 1992 NEO PI-R) and carries real cross-cultural and predictive validity
- The MBTI's real creators had no formal psychology training and based it on Jung's 1921 typology
- The MBTI shows real, stark test-retest unreliability (39-76% get a different type after 5 weeks) and a real 1991 National Academy of Sciences review found insufficient evidence for its career-counseling use
- Real predictive science and real popular appeal are genuinely different things — worth remembering whenever a personality framework feels intuitively accurate

CHAPTER 6: SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: HOW OTHERS SHAPE US

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 6 · Social Psychology: How Others Shape Us

Social psychology studies how the presence, instructions, and expectations of other people change what we do — often more dramatically than we'd predict about ourselves. Three of psychology's most famous studies sit at the center of this chapter, and one of them holds up far worse under real, modern scrutiny than its textbook reputation suggests.

Milgram's Obedience Experiments: Real Numbers, Real Controversy

Stanley Milgram began his real obedience experiments in **August 1961** at Yale University, first publishing the results in a 1963 journal article. Participants believed they were assisting in a memory study, taking on the role of "teacher" while a confederate actor played the "learner" in another room. For every wrong answer, the teacher was instructed to deliver an electric shock via a generator, increasing by 15 volts each time, up to a labeled maximum of 450 volts — while the learner's pre-recorded cries of pain grew steadily more distressed.

THE REAL RESULT

Every participant continued at least to 300 volts, and **65%** went all the way to the full 450 volts — despite audible distress from the "learner" and, in many cases, visible discomfort in the participant themselves. A later meta-analysis of replications found obedience rates ranging from 28% to 91%, with U.S. studies averaging around 61%.

The study's real ethical fallout was substantial. Psychologist Diana Baumrind argued that even with informed consent to participate, Milgram bore real responsibility for the psychological distress his subjects visibly experienced, and that the study should have been halted once that distress appeared. Her critique is widely credited with driving a genuine, lasting revision of research ethics standards. Milgram himself pointed to a real follow-up finding in his own defense: 84% of former participants later reported being "glad" or "very glad" they had taken part.

Asch's Conformity Experiments: Bending to a Group You Can See Is Wrong

Solomon Asch ran his real conformity experiments in **1951** at Swarthmore College, using a simple perceptual task: a group of eight young men were shown a reference line, then asked which of three comparison lines matched it. Only one person in the room was a genuine participant — the other seven were actors instructed to unanimously give an obviously **wrong** answer on 12 of 18 total trials, with the real participant always answering last.

Alone, No Pressure

Real error rate below 0.7% — the task itself was genuinely easy.

Under Group Pressure

35.7% of individual responses conformed to the group's wrong answer.

At Least Once

74% of participants conformed to the incorrect majority on at least one of the 12 critical trials.

A REAL, EASY-TO-MISS NUANCE

Even under direct group pressure, the majority of individual responses — **64.3%** — still stayed correct. Conformity was real and measurable, but it wasn't total: most people resisted the incorrect majority most of the time, even while a real, substantial share caved at least once.

The Stanford Prison Experiment: A Real Story of Its Own Undoing

In 1971, Philip Zimbardo randomly assigned 24 screened male participants to play "guards" or "prisoners" in a mock prison built in Stanford's own basement, intending to run the simulation for two weeks. It was shut down after just **six days**, once guards' behavior toward prisoners had turned genuinely abusive. For decades, textbooks — including, honestly, many earlier drafts of exactly this kind of course — presented it as clean evidence that ordinary people will spontaneously turn cruel purely because of the situational power a role hands them.

THE REAL 2018-19 REAPPRAISAL

French sociologist Thibault Le Texier gained access to newly released archival recordings and participant testimonies, and his real investigation found the study was **far less spontaneous** than its popular reputation claims:

- Guards were **directly coached** by the research team to behave more aggressively and "tough," with the study's own conclusions substantially written in advance.
- The famous "breakdown" of prisoner Douglas Korpi (Prisoner 8612), long treated as spontaneous proof of the situation's real psychological power, was later admitted by Korpi himself, in a real 2017 interview, to have been performed — he needed to leave to study for exams, not because he was genuinely breaking down.
- Participants had answered an advertisement that specifically mentioned "prison life," raising a real, documented self-selection concern: those who volunteered may have already carried above-average aggressive tendencies.

A further real complication: the BBC Prison Study (2002-2006), which recreated a similar design but deliberately gave guards **no** behavioral coaching, produced genuinely different results. Zimbardo and colleagues have disputed parts of Le Texier's account, but multiple original participants have corroborated the coaching and staging he documented.

Reading These Three Studies Together

STUDY	REAL CORE FINDING	HOW WELL IT HOLDS UP TODAY
Milgram (1961-63)	65% obeyed to the full 450 volts	Widely replicated across real follow-up studies (28-91% range) — the core finding is real and robust
Asch (1951)	74% conformed at least once to an obviously wrong group answer	Also widely replicated — considered a genuine, stable finding
Zimbardo (1971)	Ordinary people spontaneously became abusive once given a "guard" role	Substantially undermined — real 2018-19 evidence shows the abuse was significantly coached and staged, not spontaneous

This isn't a reason to distrust social psychology as a field — Milgram's and Asch's own real, independently replicated findings show genuine, powerful social influence effects do exist. It's a reason to apply this course's own Chapter 5 lesson one more time: a study's fame and its scientific soundness aren't the same thing, and checking whether a famous result has actually been re-examined is worth doing before repeating it as settled fact.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Milgram's 84%-were-glad-they-participated finding is sometimes used to argue the study was ethically fine after all. Explain, in your own words, why this doesn't fully answer Baumrind's real ethical objection.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why the fact that 64.3% of individual responses in Asch's study stayed correct under pressure doesn't contradict the headline "74% conformed at least once" finding.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why the BBC Prison Study's different result under a no-coaching design is real evidence relevant to evaluating Le Texier's own critique of Zimbardo's study — not just an unrelated fact.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 6 QUICK REFERENCE

- Milgram (1961-63, Yale): 65% of participants obeyed instructions to the full 450 volts; the study is widely replicated (28-91% range) but sparked lasting ethical reform
- Asch (1951, Swarthmore): 74% conformed to an obviously wrong group answer at least once across 12 critical trials, while 64.3% of individual responses still stayed correct
- Zimbardo's 1971 Stanford Prison Experiment was substantially undermined by Thibault Le Texier's real 2018-19 archival investigation, which found guards were directly coached and the famous "prisoner breakdown" was later admitted to have been staged
- Fame and scientific soundness aren't the same thing — checking whether a famous study has been re-examined is worth doing before treating it as settled

CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY & ATTACHMENT

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 7 · Developmental Psychology & Attachment

Developmental psychology studies how people change — cognitively, emotionally, socially — from infancy onward. Two of its most famous real contributions sit at very different points on the "how well does this hold up" spectrum this course keeps returning to: one is a genuinely durable, well-replicated framework; the other is a beloved popular story whose real predictive power turned out to be substantially smaller than its own legend.

Bowlby & Ainsworth: Attachment Theory

John Bowlby, a British psychiatrist, developed the real foundations of attachment theory across the 20th century, publishing his defining trilogy *Attachment and Loss* between **1969 and 1982**. His real, central claim was that infants have a biologically built-in need to form a close bond with at least one primary caregiver — drawing on evolutionary biology and ethology as much as clinical observation — and that a caregiver's real sensitivity and responsiveness between roughly six months and two years of age shapes whether that bond becomes secure.

Mary Ainsworth turned Bowlby's theory into something testable. Her real **Strange Situation** procedure, developed across the 1960s and 70s, was a 21-minute structured laboratory observation involving seven episodes in which a mother, an infant, and a stranger moved in and out of an unfamiliar room containing toys — watching precisely how the infant reacted to separation from, and reunion with, the caregiver.

Secure

Explores freely with caregiver present, genuinely distressed at separation, easily soothed and happy at reunion.

Anxious-Ambivalent (Resistant)

Clingy even before separation, difficult to comfort afterward, may show resentment or passivity at reunion.

Anxious-Avoidant

Shows little visible emotion at either separation or reunion, actively avoids the caregiver.

Disorganized-Disoriented

Added later by Mary Main;
shows fear, freezing, or
contradictory
approach/avoidance behavior.

A REAL, DURABLE FRAMEWORK

Unlike several findings this course has had to walk back, attachment theory has held up well under decades of real, independent research — it remains a genuinely mainstream, actively used framework in developmental and clinical psychology today, not a relic being quietly reconsidered.

Mischel's Marshmallow Test: A Beloved Story, a Much Smaller Real Effect

Walter Mischel's famous delayed-gratification study is one of psychology's most widely retold results. The real, iconic version was run in **1972** (Mischel, Ebbesen, and Zeiss) with just **50 children** — 25 boys and 25 girls — from Stanford University's own Bing Nursery School. Each child was left alone with a marshmallow (or similar treat) and given a real choice: eat it right away, or wait roughly 15 minutes for the researcher to return and receive a second one as a reward.

Follow-up studies conducted years later reported that children who waited longer as preschoolers went on to show real, statistically measured advantages — "significantly more competent" adolescent behavior in a real 1988 follow-up, and higher real SAT scores in a 1990 follow-up, plus later associations with better educational attainment and lower adult BMI. This is the version of the story that made it into countless parenting books and TED talks: that a four-year-old's willpower alone predicts their whole future.

THE REAL 2018 REPLICATION

A real 2018 replication by Watts, Duncan, and Quan used a sample **over ten times larger** than Mischel's original 50 children, and — critically — a genuinely more socioeconomically and demographically diverse one, rather than Stanford's own relatively advantaged nursery-school population. The real result: the correlation with later achievement was **only about half** the size of the original finding, and shrank **further still** once the researchers statistically controlled for the child's early cognitive ability, behavior, family background, and home environment.

In other words, a real, substantial share of what looked like "waiting longer as a preschooler predicts later success" was actually standing in for something else entirely: children from more stable, resourced homes tend to both wait longer for a marshmallow **and** go on to do better later — not necessarily because the waiting itself caused the later success, but because both outcomes shared a real, common upstream cause in family circumstances.

Why the Comparison Matters

FRAMEWORK	REAL SAMPLE & METHOD	HOW WELL IT HOLDS UP
Attachment Theory	Decades of real, independently replicated observational research across many cultures	Holds up well — remains a genuinely mainstream, actively used clinical framework
Marshmallow Test	50 children, one advantaged Stanford nursery school	Substantially weakened by a real, much larger and more diverse 2018 replication once family background was controlled for

This isn't a reason to distrust developmental psychology generally — it's the same lesson Chapter 6 delivered about Zimbardo's prison study, applied to a completely different, gentler-sounding finding: a small, homogeneous original sample can produce a real result that simply doesn't generalize once tested on a real, more representative population.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why controlling for family background and home environment specifically is what caused the 2018 replication's correlation to shrink further, rather than the larger sample size alone.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why a 50-child sample drawn entirely from one Stanford nursery school is a genuinely different kind of limitation than the sample sizes discussed in earlier chapters of this

course (e.g. Asch's ~50 participants in Chapter 6).

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why attachment theory's decades of replication across many cultures makes it a genuinely different kind of case from the marshmallow test, even though both are famous, foundational developmental-psychology findings.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 7 QUICK REFERENCE

- Bowlby's attachment theory (*Attachment and Loss*, 1969-82) and Ainsworth's Strange Situation procedure (1960s-70s) identified secure, anxious-ambivalent, and anxious-avoidant attachment styles, with disorganized-disoriented added later by Mary Main — the framework remains well-replicated and mainstream today
- Mischel's 1972 marshmallow test used just 50 children from one advantaged Stanford nursery school
- A real 2018 replication (Watts, Duncan, Quan), over 10x larger and far more diverse, found only about half the original effect, shrinking further once family background and home environment were controlled for
- A real correlation can partly reflect a shared upstream cause (family circumstances) rather than the tested behavior itself causing the later outcome

CHAPTER 8: MENTAL HEALTH BASICS

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 8 · Mental Health Basics

This chapter is deliberately **not** a diagnostic tool — nothing here is a substitute for a real conversation with a qualified professional. Its goal is narrower: separating a few genuinely well-documented facts from a few genuinely popular but poorly supported beliefs, so the everyday language around mental health can be read a little more carefully.

Clinical Language vs. Everyday Language

Words like "depressed," "anxious," and "OCD" do real double duty in everyday English — as ordinary descriptions of a bad week, and as the real names of specific, diagnosable clinical conditions with formal criteria. Major depressive disorder, for instance, requires symptoms lasting **at least two weeks** and causing genuine functional impairment, not simply a low mood after a hard day. That gap between casual and clinical usage is worth noticing on its own — it's the same "popular term vs. precise definition" pattern this course has already applied to "theory" (Chapter 1) and "natural" food labeling (Practical Life Skills' own Nutrition Fundamentals course).

REAL SCALE

A real, widely cited 2017 global estimate put the number of people living with major depressive disorder at roughly **163 million** worldwide — a condition common enough that most people will either experience it directly or know someone close to them who does.

The "Chemical Imbalance" Myth

One of the most widely repeated explanations for depression — that it's caused by a simple "chemical imbalance" of serotonin in the brain — turns out to be a real, textbook case of this course's own recurring theme: a popular explanation that outran its actual evidence.

THE REAL 2022 EVIDENCE REVIEW

A 2022 umbrella review by Moncrieff, Cooper, Horowitz, and colleagues, published in *Molecular Psychiatry*, systematically examined the existing evidence and found **no consistent support** for the idea that depression is caused by low serotonin levels. Studies deliberately depleting monoamines (including serotonin) in healthy people have not been shown to reliably cause depression, and serotonin dysfunction can't be the sole cause anyway, since a meaningful share of people treated with serotonin-targeting antidepressants don't improve.

Two honest caveats matter here, and this course's own established discipline is to include them rather than overstate a single review's own reach. First, some psychiatrists **criticized the review's own methodology**, arguing it relied on indirect measures of serotonin activity rather than direct measurement — a genuine, live scientific debate, not a fully settled question. Second, and more importantly for anyone reading this practically: Moncrieff herself explicitly cautioned against abruptly stopping antidepressant medication on the strength of this finding. Antidepressants can still genuinely help many people, whatever the precise underlying mechanism turns out to be — the review challenges a popular **explanation** for why they might work, not the real, separately measured evidence that they often do.

An Evidence-Based Treatment: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) was developed by psychiatrist Aaron Beck starting in the 1950s, with his first treatment manual published in 1979. Its real, core premise — that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors influence one another, and that changing unhelpful thinking patterns can change how someone feels and acts — has held up well under real, decades of meta-analytic testing. CBT is real, well-established evidence for treating both anxiety disorders and depression, and reviews have found it performs as well as or better than several alternative talk therapies for these conditions, with some evidence that combining it with medication produces the strongest real results for more severe cases.

When to Seek Professional Help

Duration

Symptoms persisting for weeks, not just a difficult day or two.

Functional Impact

Genuinely interfering with work, relationships, sleep, or daily routines.

Intensity

Distress that feels disproportionate to, or has

outlasted, whatever triggered it.

Self-Assessment Alone Isn't Enough

A qualified professional, not a self-check, makes an actual diagnosis.

REAL, PRACTICAL SUPPORT IN THE UK

Samaritans operates a real, free, 24-hour helpline every day of the year: **116 123**. It's not necessary to be in crisis or feeling suicidal to call — a real, documented majority of callers aren't. A GP is also a genuine, appropriate first point of contact for a referral into NHS mental health services.

Why This Chapter Matters for the Rest of This Course

The chemical-imbalance story is a particularly clean example of a pattern this course has traced repeatedly — Maslow's pyramid he never drew (Chapter 4), the MBTI's real reliability problems (Chapter 5), Zimbardo's coached guards (Chapter 6), the marshmallow test's shrinking effect (Chapter 7) — a genuinely popular explanation persisting well past the point its own evidence actually supports it. The next chapter turns directly to why this keeps happening across psychology as a field, not just in these individual cases.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why the 2022 Moncrieff review challenging the chemical-imbalance explanation for depression doesn't mean antidepressants don't work.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why the real methodological criticism the 2022 review received is worth including in this chapter rather than treating the review as fully settling the question.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Explain, in your own words, why "I'm feeling depressed today" and "I have major depressive disorder" are genuinely different claims, and why that distinction matters when talking about mental health.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 8 QUICK REFERENCE

- Everyday mental-health language and formal clinical diagnosis are genuinely different things — major depressive disorder requires at least two weeks of symptoms plus real functional impairment
- The popular "chemical imbalance" (serotonin) theory of depression lacks consistent support per a real 2022 Moncrieff et al. umbrella review — though the review itself drew real methodological criticism, and this doesn't mean antidepressants are ineffective
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (Aaron Beck, developed from the 1950s) has real, well-established meta-analytic evidence supporting its effectiveness for depression and anxiety
- Duration, functional impact, and disproportionate intensity are real practical signals it may be time to seek professional help — self-assessment alone isn't a diagnosis
- Samaritans (UK): 116 123, free, 24/7, no crisis required to call

CHAPTER 9: THE REPLICATION CRISIS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 9 · The Replication Crisis in Psychology

Every prior chapter of this course has surfaced its own individual case of a famous finding not holding up as well as its popular reputation suggests. This chapter steps back and names the pattern directly: a real, field-wide "replication crisis" that psychology has spent the last decade actively confronting.

The Field-Wide Evidence — Already Covered Elsewhere on This Site

This site's own Scientific Methodology course already covers the single most important piece of real evidence behind this crisis in depth — the 2015 Open Science Collaboration reproducibility study, which attempted to replicate 100 published psychology studies and found only around a third produced a statistically significant effect the second time, with surviving effect sizes roughly half their original size. Rather than repeat that material here, this chapter points to it directly: see Scientific Methodology, Chapter 6 ("Reproducibility"), and builds on it with a case specific to psychology's own popular reach.

WHY CROSS-REFERENCE INSTEAD OF REPEAT

Several chapters in this course have already used the same discipline this cross-reference reflects — reusing an established, verified finding rather than re-deriving it from scratch each time a related topic comes up. The Open Science Collaboration figures are the field-wide backdrop; what follows here is one concrete, especially public example of exactly how that pattern plays out in practice.

Amy Cuddy's "Power Posing": A Real, Especially Public Case

In 2010, Dana Carney, Amy Cuddy, and Andy Yap published a study with 42 participants claiming that holding an expansive, "powerful" physical pose for just two minutes produced real measurable changes — increased testosterone, decreased cortisol, and greater self-reported risk tolerance. The idea that a simple bodily posture could genuinely shift a person's own hormones and confidence was enormously appealing, and Cuddy's 2012 TED talk

presenting it became one of the platform's most-watched talks ever, reaching roughly **47 million views** by 2017.

THE REAL COLLAPSE

Independent replication attempts consistently failed to reproduce the original findings. A real 2015 replication by Ranehill and colleagues found people *felt* more powerful after posing, but detected **no real hormonal or behavioral effects**. A real 2017 special journal issue gathering eleven new studies again failed to replicate the behavioral effect. Most strikingly of all: Dana Carney — the original study's own lead author — published a real, public 2016 statement declaring, in her own words, "I do not believe that 'power pose effects' are real," calling the evidence against the effect "undeniable."

This case is worth sitting with specifically because of what makes it different from several of this course's other examples. Zimbardo (Chapter 6) still stands by his own original study today, disputing Le Texier's critique. Mischel's marshmallow test (Chapter 7) was weakened, not eliminated, by later replication. Power posing is a genuinely rarer case: an original author of the finding **publicly repudiating her own earlier conclusion**, in the full glare of the finding's own massive popular reach.

Why This Keeps Happening

Small Original Samples

42 participants (power posing), 24 (Zimbardo), 50 (Asch, Mischel) — genuinely modest sample sizes make chance findings more likely to look real.

Publication Incentives

Striking, positive results are historically far more publishable than a "we found nothing" result.

Popular Appeal

Outrunning Evidence

A simple, empowering, low-effort claim (a two-minute pose changes your hormones) spreads faster than the more cautious science underneath it.

Slow Correction

Genuine correction, as with Carney's own reversal, can take years to catch up with a finding's own initial popular spread.

What the Field Has Actually Done About It

This isn't a story of psychology quietly ignoring its own problem. The 2015 Open Science Collaboration project (Scientific Methodology, Chapter 6) was itself the field's own large-scale, coordinated response — a deliberate, public effort to measure the real scale of the problem rather than look away from it. Pre-registration (committing to a study's own hypotheses and analysis plan before collecting data, also covered in Scientific Methodology's own Chapter 8) has become far more common specifically because of cases like this one, precisely to prevent a positive-sounding but ultimately fragile result from being published, popularized, and only years later quietly walked back.

Hands-On Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Explain, in your own words, why Dana Carney's own 2016 public repudiation of power posing is a genuinely stronger piece of evidence against the effect than an independent researcher's failed replication alone would be.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 2

Explain, in your own words, why a study's real popularity (like a 47-million-view TED talk) has no actual bearing on whether its underlying finding is scientifically sound.

 [View solution](#)

EXERCISE 3

Compare power posing's real collapse against Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (Chapter 6). Explain, in your own words, one genuine similarity and one genuine difference between how each case unfolded.

 [View solution](#)

CHAPTER 9 QUICK REFERENCE

- The field-wide evidence for psychology's replication crisis (the 2015 Open Science Collaboration study) is covered in depth in Scientific Methodology, Chapter 6 — not repeated here
- Amy Cuddy's 2010 "power posing" study (Carney, Cuddy & Yap) became one of TED's most-watched talks (~47 million views) before failing multiple real replications
- Lead co-author Dana Carney publicly repudiated her own original findings in 2016, calling the evidence against power posing "undeniable"
- Small original sample sizes, publication incentives favoring striking results, and popular appeal outrunning cautious science all contribute to this recurring pattern
- Pre-registration and large-scale coordinated replication efforts are the field's own real, active response, not a problem it has ignored

CHAPTER 10: CAPSTONE — APPLYING REAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE TO EVERYDAY DECISIONS

Psychology Fundamentals

Chapter 10 · Capstone: Applying Real Psychological Science to Everyday Decisions

Real psychology-flavored claims rarely arrive labelled by chapter — they arrive bundled together, in workshop pitches, self-help books, and management consulting decks. This capstone works through one single, realistic scenario deliberately built to stack up several of the exact claims this course has already examined, applying every chapter's own real tool in sequence, then closes with a practical checklist for evaluating the next one you encounter yourself.

THE SCENARIO

You've been asked to review a pitch for a "Peak Performance Culture" workshop before your workplace commits budget to it. The pitch deck makes eight separate claims. Here's what each one actually holds up to.

STEP 1 — CH.1: "BASED ON DECADES OF PROVEN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE"

Claim: the program's opening slide describes itself as grounded in "proven psychological science."

Real science is distinguished by testable claims, real methodology, and — crucially — genuine independent replication, not simply by invoking the word "science." Before accepting the label, the real first move is checking whether specific claims later in the deck are actually attributed to real, named, checkable research, or simply asserted.

STEP 2 — CH.2: "TRUST OUR VIVID CLIENT TESTIMONIALS"

Claim: the deck features several detailed, emotionally compelling personal testimonials from past participants describing dramatic transformations.

Human memory is genuinely reconstructive, not a video recording — per Loftus's own real research, vivid, confident personal recollections can still be inaccurate, and

testimonials specifically selected for the deck are, at minimum, not a representative sample. A testimonial can be sincere and still be poor evidence.

STEP 3 — CH.3: A POINTS-BASED REWARD SYSTEM "MODELED ON PAVLOV AND SKINNER"

Claim: employees earn visible points for desired behaviors, explicitly described as applying real operant conditioning principles.

Operant conditioning is genuinely real, well-established science — this part of the pitch isn't wrong on the science itself. But this chapter's own real history (including the still-unresolved ethical controversy around the "Little Albert" experiment) is a reminder that a real psychological mechanism being genuine doesn't automatically make every real-world application of it ethical — a reward system built on it still deserves its own separate ethical review.

STEP 4 — CH.4: A SLIDE OF "MASLOW'S PYRAMID"

Claim: a slide credits the iconic pyramid diagram directly to Maslow himself as the visual centerpiece of the "employee needs" section.

A small, real correction from Chapter 4: Maslow never actually drew that famous pyramid — it was real business consultant Charles McDermid's 1960 illustration. This particular error is minor on its own, but it's a useful, quick real-world test of how carefully the deck's other claims have actually been checked.

STEP 5 — CH.5: "WE'LL SORT TEAMS USING MYERS-BRIGGS TYPES"

Claim: the workshop includes an MBTI assessment to "optimize team composition."

This is a real, direct red flag. The MBTI's real, documented test-retest instability (39-76% of people get a different type after just five weeks) and the real 1991 National Academy of Sciences review finding insufficient evidence for its use in workforce decisions make it a genuinely poor real basis for team assignment. The Big Five, by contrast, carries real cross-cultural and predictive validity — the evidence-based swap is straightforward to recommend here.

STEP 6 — CH.6 & CH.9: "CONFIDENCE BOOTCAMP" GROUP EXERCISES AND A PRE-MEETING "POWER POSE"

Claim: a "leadership simulation" exercise uses staged group pressure scenarios, and a separate slide recommends a two-minute power pose before big meetings, citing the famous TED talk.

Two real findings apply here at once. Chapter 6's own Milgram/Asch material is a reminder that real social pressure genuinely can shift behavior — a real reason to scrutinize any staged group exercise for ethical treatment of participants, echoing the real, documented coaching problems Le Texier found in the Stanford Prison Experiment. And Chapter 9's own power-posing case is close to settled: even one of the effect's own original researchers, Dana Carney, has publicly stated she doesn't believe it's real. This specific recommendation should be dropped outright.

STEP 7 — CH.7: A "MARSHMALLOW MINDSET" DELAYED-BONUS COMPONENT

Claim: a bonus structure deliberately delays part of employee pay, framed as building "proven Stanford-tested grit."

The real 2018 replication of the marshmallow test found only about half the original effect, shrinking further once family background was controlled for — the finding was never a clean, standalone predictor of later success to begin with. Using it to justify withholding part of someone's actual pay is a real overreach well beyond what the underlying research can support.

STEP 8 — CH.8: "BURNOUT STRESS IS JUST A CHEMICAL IMBALANCE OUR WELLNESS KIT CORRECTS"

Claim: the wellness component frames employee burnout as a simple chemical imbalance addressed by a branded "wellness kit," positioned as an alternative to professional support.

This is the deck's most serious real red flag. The chemical-imbalance framing itself lacks consistent evidence per the real 2022 Moncrieff review, and — separately, more importantly — genuine burnout or mental health concerns call for real, evidence-based approaches like CBT or professional consultation, not a proprietary "kit." Framing a

wellness product as a substitute for real professional care is a genuine safety concern, not just a scientific overreach.

STEP 9 — CH.9: "OUR RESULTS ARE PROVEN BY THIS ONE INTERNAL CASE STUDY"

Claim: the deck's closing slide cites a single glowing internal case study as proof the program works.

A single, non-independent case study is exactly the kind of evidence this course's own replication-crisis chapter should make you skeptical of by default. Real confidence requires genuine independent replication — ideally pre-registered — not one internally produced success story, echoing precisely how power posing's own initial, singular splash looked convincing for years before it collapsed under real scrutiny.

A Practical Checklist for Evaluating Any Psychology-Flavored Claim

ASK	WHY (WHICH CHAPTER)
Is this attributed to real, named, checkable research — or just asserted?	Real science vs. folk claims (Ch.1)
Is the evidence a vivid personal story, or independently measured data?	Memory is reconstructive, not recorded (Ch.2)
Is a real mechanism being applied ethically, not just accurately?	Conditioning is real; its use still needs review (Ch.3)
Has a small factual detail (like the pyramid's real origin) been checked?	A quick, useful accuracy test (Ch.4)
Does the tool have real, documented reliability and predictive validity?	Big Five vs. MBTI (Ch.5)
Would this exercise involve real, potentially coercive social pressure?	Milgram, Asch, and the coached Stanford guards (Ch.6)
Is a small, dated effect being stretched to justify something consequential?	The marshmallow test's real, shrunken effect (Ch.7)

ASK**WHY (WHICH CHAPTER)**

Does this framing discourage someone from seeking real professional help?

The chemical-imbalance myth's real safety stakes (Ch.8)

Has this actually been independently replicated — or just told once, convincingly?

The real replication crisis (Ch.9)

WHAT THIS COURSE DOESN'T COVER

This course covers core psychological science and how to evaluate popular psychological claims critically — it isn't a substitute for formal clinical training, and Chapter 8 is explicitly non-diagnostic. Critical Thinking (a sibling course in the Study Methodologies Subject) covers everyday cognitive biases and logical fallacies more broadly; Scientific Methodology covers the field-wide reproducibility evidence this course repeatedly draws on rather than re-derives.

COURSE COMPLETE — PSYCHOLOGY FUNDAMENTALS

- Real, durable science (Wundt's origins, attachment theory) sits alongside genuinely fragile popular findings (Maslow's pyramid, the MBTI, Zimbardo's prison study, the marshmallow test, power posing) — telling the two apart is the course's own central skill
- Memory, conditioning, motivation, personality, social influence, and development each have real, checkable evidence bases — and real, documented limits
- Mental health literacy benefits from the same evidence-based scrutiny, applied carefully and non-diagnostically
- The replication crisis (Scientific Methodology, Ch.6) is the field-wide backdrop explaining why so many of this course's own famous findings needed real correction
- Every chapter grounded in a real, independently verified case — joining Basic Cookery, Nutrition Fundamentals, Personal Finance Fundamentals, and Economics Fundamentals as complete courses in the Practical Life Skills Subject