

11—Human Behavior and Safety

top production may be forced to take unnecessary risks to achieve that goal. The only way out of such a conflict is the erasing or weakening one of the signs, thereby altering the individual's internal motivational system.

The approach-avoidance conflict is further complicated by the notion of a goal gradient for positive and negative goals, as pictured in Fig 11-6. Other things being equal, the

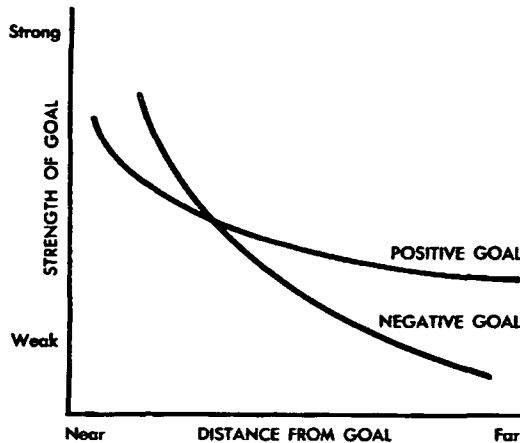


FIG 11-6 —The approach-avoidance conflict is complicated by the different goal gradients for positive and negative goals

closer one is to a goal, the stronger it is. Negative goals, however, are stronger the closer one is to the goal. Conversely, positive goals appear stronger the farther away one is from the goal. So as the individual approaches an approach-avoidance goal, the negative or repelling aspects of the goal appear stronger. This may lead to retreat which will result in vacillation and indecision. The approach-avoidance situation is common.

Reaction to frustration

In most cases, the conflicts described will lead to frustration. This frustration may often lead to positive, constructive resolution of the situation. For example, the individual who is facing the conflict of top production, but at increased risk, may develop a new system for processing the product at a faster and safer rate.

On the other hand the frustration often leads to some negative form of behavior, a few examples of which are listed. This is by no means an exhaustive list, nor are they mutually exclusive, one may appear in combination with another.

Aggression. This form of behavior is characterized by some type of attack toward another person or object. The four-year-old boy who beats his playmate over the head with a baseball bat is obviously exhibiting aggressive behavior. The forms of aggression of adults can be overt, physical, or verbal. They can also be disguised, the tidbit of shop gossip, or the subtle comment by an aspirant for a promotion about one of his possible competitors, could be just as devastating to the victim as the baseball bat.

Regression. Regression is the tendency for an individual who finds himself in a frustrating circumstance to revert to an earlier form of behavior, such as putting on a temper tantrum or pouting. Such behavior most likely would occur in the case of an individual who, during his formative years, found that such behavior worked, in other words, he got his way by a display of temper.

Fixation. In fixated behavior, the individual persists in a particular kind of nonconstructive behavior even though it is clear that the behavior is inadequate to resolve the problem. Thus, a mechanic may persist in trying to fit a bolt in place, even though he realizes that it is the wrong size.

Resignation. Resignation is the tendency for an individual to give up—to withhold any sense of emotional or personal involvement in the situation. Failing to achieve some goal, this person loses any positive concern about his job and adopts an apathetic attitude toward the situation.

Negativism. In this form of behavior, the individual adopts a negative, resistive position with respect to the situation. A person whose suggestions have not been accepted may take a dim view of any other ideas.

Repression. This behavior is characterized